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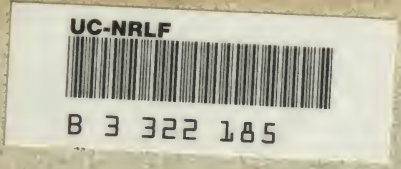

THE COWBOY AND THE LADY

BY

CLYDE FITCH

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City
New and Explicit Descriptive Catalogue Mailed Free on Request

The Cowboy and The Lady

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

CLYDE FITCH

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CHARACTERS

TEDDY NORTH, *Harvard '86*
BILL RANSOM, *Harvard '90*
WESTON
QUICK FOOT JIM
JOE
PETE
DAVE
DICK ROD
JUDGE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
SHERIFF
FOREMAN OF JURY
MRS. WESTON
MIDGE
MOLLY LARKINS, *Proprietress of the dance hall*
MISS PRISSIMS, *Pianist of the dance hall.*
MISS CARTON
MISS LARRABEE
Clerks, Cowboys and Other Men and Women.

DOUBLES

RANSON *and* ATTORNEY
JUDGE *and* SHERIFF
WESTON *and* COURT SHERIFF

125

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. *The Ranch.*
ACT II. *The Dance Hall.*
ACT III. *Silverville.*

PERIOD. *Nowadays.*
PLACE. *Colorado.*

The Cowboy and The Lady

ACT I

SCENE: TEDDY'S *Ranch. Across the stage from* R. *to* C. *is the house. It stands on a ledge (evidently) behind it. Beyond the gully rises a mountain in the near distance. There are boulders and small hardy trees about. The sky is very blue, the clouds white and fleecy, the green of the foliage, such as there is, is very bright, all showing a clear, rarified air, high up. A path goes from the porch off* L.U. *and* R.*; also one goes extreme* R. *between house and proscenium arch. The path that leads off* L.U. *is the principal one, and shows that as it disappears it makes an abrupt descent. The horses are not ridden up to the house, but are left at the foot of this steep porch. There are common kitchen chairs on the porch and the old soap box which also serves as a stool or seat.*

MUSIC: *"Hanging Danny Deaver," etc.*

DISCOVERED: *At rise of curtain enter* QUICK FOOT JIM L. *very slowly. He is a half-breed; he has an Indian cast of features; his hair is very black and oily and hangs straight and rather long. He*

is of a fine physique and is a handsome creature of his type. He half-swings, half-glides along in a motion habitual with him. He speaks the English of a cowboy with a slight accent of the Indian. He gives vent to a guttural sound once in a while as indicated in the text and expressive of a thought or decision. He is dressed as a cowboy with the broad decorated trousers. He is picturesque and attractive. At L.C. *he hesitates and looks about him, listens a moment. Grunts as much as to say, "No one is there," and goes to the door and pushes it open, but does not enter.*

TIME: *Noon of a bright summer day.*

JIM. Hello, there!

RANSOM. *(From inside)* Hello, **Jim!**

JIM. Anybody here?

RANSOM. No—everybody gone.

JIM. Ain't *you* anybody?

RANSOM. *(Appearing in doorway)* I meant Teddy and the rest of the boys. (RANSOM *is a strong, fine man about thirty—a lawyer by profession, but now going in for ranch life. He wears a dark blue shirt, well open at the neck, and dark trousers turned into high boots. His hair needs cutting, and brushing, too, at the moment. He holds a book in one arm, finger marking the place. He smiles pleasantly at* JIM.)

JIM. Me knows where the boys are. They alls to old Tanner's lynching.

RANSON. They *are lynching* Old Tanner, then?

JIM. Yaas.

RANSOM. Well, Teddy's over by the Spring Rock with some of the stock.

JIM. Well, mebbe you do. *(Pauses and grunts.)*

Who's the new people from the sunrise land—they what's come to the Wheatley Ranch?

RANSON. Mr. and Mrs. Weston. He's here for his health.

JIM. *(Interrupts with a grunt)* He no give his health chance, he no take care he die with his boots on.

RANSOM. Mrs. Weston is a stunner—and can ride anything! You'll like her!

JIM. Mebbe.

RANSOM. What's the matter? *(Going nearer* JIM.)

JIM. Nothing. *(Grunt.)* The dude boss he like Mrs. Weston.

RANSOM. How did you know that?

JIM. The husband he say so.

RANSOM. *(More interested and serious)* Was he angry?

JIM. No! He only laugh!

RANSOM. *(Under his breath)* The cur! Who did Weston tell this to?

JIM. My girl! *(Grunts.)*

RANSOM. Why did he tell your girl that?

JIM. *(Starts, looks off* L.) Here he come now.

RANSOM. *(Leans out and looks off* L.) I don't want to see him. Meet him, Jim, and say no—one's home. *(He goes in and closes the door softly behind, then the sound of drawing a bolt.* JIM *leaps down from the porch. As he reaches the ground* WESTON *enters* L. *He is a good-looking man between thirty and forty—a selfish man, thinking only of his own pleasures, honest with men from habit, dishonest with women for the same reason.)*

WESTON. Hello, there, you brave Red Man of the Forest—are the boys here? *(Coming down* C.)

JIM. No. All gone.

WESTON. To the lynching? Why aren't you along?

JIM. *(Darkly)* Jim got another lunching in his min'.

WESTON. Cad! I'm glad you've got something in that noble receptacle. *(Clapping his hand on* JIM'S *forehead.* JIM *strikes away his hand with a snarl. Crosses* L.*)*

JIM. *(With a change of manner and voice to dogged threatening)* Me don't want no-one also fooling around *my girl.*

WESTON. Oh, you're too damn particular!

JIM. That's what Jim come to say to dude boss. *(Goes nearer him.)*

WESTON. What!

JIM. If you no stop trying to steal my girl, you find heap big trouble. *(Goes nearer to him.)*

WESTON. The mistress of the Silverville dance hall isn't *your girl!*

JIM. *(Angry grunt)* You know Jim mean Molly Larkins all the same.

WESTON. The girl's free to choose. *(Turn.)*

JIM. Mebbe—but you ain't. *(Going up to him.)*

WESTON. That's none of *your* business.

JIM. Ain't it?

WESTON. Get out of my way or I'll knock you down!

JIM. *(Slowly draws aside, looks up at* WESTON *from under his eyebrows with a sinister look)* You knock me down, when the water it run up hill.

WESTON. *(Passes, sneering, and speaks as he moves with his back to* JIM L.E. *without looking around)* The first thing you know I'll have the sheriff look after you as a dangerous character. *(Crosses* R. *and up to door.)*

(JIM *grunts and slowly exits* L. WESTON *tries door —it is locked. Knocks—there is no answer. He knocks again—no answer. He whistles.)*

RANSOM. *(Inside—confidently)* Is that you, Jim?

WESTON. It's Weston.

RANSOM. *(Disappointed—without thinking)* Oh, damn!

WESTON. What's up?

RANSOM. Nothing! *(Opens door, but not very wide and stands in the opening so as to block the way.)* The boys are seeing the last of poor little Midge's father. By the way, be careful you don't say anything before the girl—she doesn't know the brute's being strung up. It would hurt her tender little heart. We want to just let his memory and himself die out of her life. *(Far in the distance is heard men's voices, singing the air of "Hang Jeff Davis on a Sour Apple Tree," etc. This grows louder slowly as the men approach.)* There are the fellows now coming back from the lynching. I hope they won't meet *her*.

WESTON. *(Looking up at* RANSOM *cunningly)* So *you're* looking after the girl now.

(READY Shot R.*)*

RANSOM. *(Angry)* Do you mean an insult?

WESTON. *You* don't mean to pretend that old blackguard's daughter—— *(Interrupted.)*

RANSOM. I mean to say that Tanner's daughter is a child of God's mountains—not of his blackguardian of your dance hall, and as pure a little soul as ever breathed. And *you* had better pretend to believe that, too, if you want to come to this ranch. (WESTON *whistles.)*

WESTON. But my dear man, you must acknowledge the way she lives—— *(Interrupted.)*

RANSOM. *(Interrupting)* Teddy went this morning to do his best to persuade her to come and live with us.

WESTON. Here with two men?

RANSOM. I am drawing out the papers now which will make Midge legally *Teddy's sister*.

WESTON. Oh!——

RANSOM. And, to finish, I am *gradually* losing my temper, Weston. Don't make me lose it altogether. *(A rifle shot is heard* R.*)* There she is! Hurrah! Teddy's *brought* her with him——

WESTON. *(Depreciatingly)* What's North shooting?

RANSOM. That wasn't Teddy's rifle. That's Midge's usual signal,—she calls it ringing the front door bell. Have you been here a fortnight and don't know she's the champion woman rifle shooter of Colorado, and, for that matter, I'll bet of the world?

(The men singing have been coming nearer, and now they enter L. DAVE, JOE, PETER *and four others.* MIDGE *enters* R.U.E.*—holds her rifle over her* R. *shoulder. They notice* MIDGE *and the singing suddenly stops.)*

MIDGE. *(Very girlish—free in gesture and manner from the purity of her nature and her unconventional life.)* Hello, boys. What's the matter? Where've you been to?

JOE. Where have we been to? (MIDGE R.C. *with men* L.C. *A moment's pause. The men hesitate to answer.)*

MIDGE. *(Interrupting)* You've been up to some lark now, ain't you? *(Men silent. Laughing)* I declare! Are you all struck dumb?

JOE. Well, you see, we all's jos be'n nowheres!

MIDGE. Fudge! Well, men beat me. I never join this gang that I don't interrupt something. I'm off. I ain't spoiling sport. *(She turns to the men.)* Oh, I say, which'll hold their hat for a target?

ALL MEN. *(Holding up their hats in their right hands) Me!*

MIDGE. *(Laughing, delighted)* Oh, well, I can't hit 'em all! *You,* Joe. *(All but* JOE *drop their hats.*

MIDGE *aims at* JOE'S *hat and fires.* JOE *quickly takes it down to look, as the men also crowd around to see it, except* WESTON *and* RANSOM, *who are* R. *with* MIDGE.)

JOE. Clean through the blamed middle!

ALL MEN. Hurrah for Midge!

MIDGE. That's my card! Now I'll make myself scarce, so you all can have your run out! I know—somethin' not keyrect fur gals. *(She goes to door, turns in the doorway, and putting her forefinger by her nose, speaks in a queer low voice)* Oh, my! *(All laugh and* MIDGE *exits* R. *in house.)*

WESTON. So they've lynched Midge's father at last—have they? *(Coming down.)*

RANSOM. Ssh! Not so loud! *(Closes door with a glance back at the house where* MIDGE *is.)*

PETE. He fit like a wolf when we cotched him, and he was all barricaded in that damned dirty pen of his'n, but of course we-uns was too many for him and 'fore long he allowed as his jig was up.

RANSOM. Poor old dog!

DAVE. *Dog* ain't a good enough name! *(Bus. with pipe.)*

JOE. When onct he made up his mind he hed to be, he 'peared to like it.

PETE. Yes! He behaved so's he hed a sorter pride in an ending off that way.

WESTON. *(Smiling)* You don't say so!

JOE. He actually went up with a grin on his rotten face—made him sorter of happy to feel he was dying the same way as bigger'n dirtier'n pluckier men 'an him.

RANSOM. Ugh! Don't talk any more about it! *(Walks off to* R. *of porch and looks off* R.*)*

PETE. *(To* JOE *with a gesture indicating* RANSOM) Is *him's* the boss? *(All men smile.)*

JOE. No, him's his pard. The boss is the fellow what we saw down the road this morning——

PETE. Not that dude!

JOE. You want to call him that to his face onct! *(The others laugh and say, "Yes, go on! Do!")*

WESTON. Yes! Go on, *do,* while we're here to enjoy it.

PETE. *(Laughing)* So the cuss is game, is he?

DAVE. He's dead game and awful willin'.

JOE. Put all the amachure sluggers to sleep outside of Boston fur three years.

PETE. Why in hell's he dress like a fool, then?

WESTON. *Ask* him *that* once, too! *(All the others laugh and say, "Yes, go on! Ask him!")*

JOE. Yes, in jest them same words! *(With a slugging gesture.) Dar'st*—— And when you wake your blessed mother won't know you!

(Enter TEDDY R.U.E.*)*

TEDDY. Hello, boys!

BOYS. Hello!

TEDDY. Where's Midge? Is she here?

JOE. She's in the house.

TEDDY. Well, she's a sprinter from 'way back. Say, boys, you haven't said anything about the lynching of her father, have you? Hello, Weston. What's up?

WESTON. Expected to find my wife here.

JOE. We've bring along a new boy, Boss, as wants to join—Pete Crane. *(Pushing* CRANE *forward.)*

TEDDY. Glad to see you, Pete. Any friend of Joe's is welcome! *(He shakes* JOE'S *hand and* JOE *makes a grimace showing* TEDDY'S *grip is so hard it surprises and hurts him.)*

PETE. I ain't sure as this is exactly the gang for me.

TEDDY. *(Bridling)* What's the matter with this gang?

PETE. Well, I ain't no Prince of Wales, myself!

TEDDY. You object to my clothes? Well, a good many of the boys stack up against them—or perhaps you don't like the height of my collar? Well, I wear that for two reasons: It conceals a monotony of neck and prevents anyone getting a half-nelson on you. *(Takes hold of* PETE'S *neck.)* You seem to be in pretty good condition, Pete. I won't take any chances with you. *(Takes off coat and hat.)* Now, what's it to be? Catch-as-catch-can, on the ground, go as you please, or stand up?

PETE. Why, Boss, I ain't got no right to take advantage of you. I never got licked in my life.

TEDDY. *(Smiling, coaxing)* Well, you're about due. *(Throwing off his coat and going to* R.C.*)*

PETE. First man whose back is on the ground loses. I'll bet you fifty even——

TEDDY. You're on, Pete!

(All the men push and urge PETE *to go on—saying, "Go in! You're in for it!" "Go on!"* PETE *takes hold of his coat. The men make a semi-circle, and there is a short bout, the men applauding, shouting and talking, and at the end of the contest,* TEDDY *throws* PETE. *The men applaud.* PETE *and* TEDDY *shake hands and put on their coats, etc.)*

TEDDY. Nothing to it!

PETE. Well, Boss, I'd like to wear one of them collars myself.

TEDDY. That's all right, Pete, but you're a bad match-maker. Say, boys, I've some news! What do you think? *(They all gather around* TEDDY, *including* RANSOM, *who re-enters at this moment.)* Midge has come to live with us for good—to-day.

JOE. Three cheers for Midge!

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

TEDDY. Ransom here is seeing to all the law business so she'll be just like my own sister.

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah!

TEDDY. Boys, you're bricks! But say, there's only one trouble! We've got to take a reef in our language with a young girl about all the time.

(PETE *whistles loud.)*

JOE. Right you are!

WESTON. This ranch'll better adopt young ladies' boarding-school rules.

TEDDY. Don't be an ass, Weston! But be careful, boys, about your stories. Nothing strong when she's around.

JOE. *(Laughing) Ourn!* That's good! Ourn are all Sunday-school books compared with yourn! *(All laugh.)*

TEDDY. Well, of course, I'll set you a good example! I'm going to get up an entirely new repertoire! Then there's swearing. *(All titter.)*

PETE. You ain't a-going to gag us, are you?

JOE. *(With a wink to the boys)* Are *you* going to set us all another example there?

TEDDY. Yes, sir.

JOE. The limit! *(A general movement among the men of humorous despair at the idea of* TEDDY'S *succeeding, and* JOE *shouts out, "The limit!")*

TEDDY. Say, boys, I'm not so bad as all that! You see this box. *(Getting a square box about a foot square, made with a slit in the top from inside door* R.*)* That goes right there—*(Holding it to inside of house to* R. *of door)*—and every time a fellow swears before Midge, down goes a quarter. Do you understand? *(All laugh and say, "All right, Boss!" etc.)*

PETE. What do you call a swear, anyway?

TEDDY. Beginning with damn, everything that

goes before and after—*(There is a nail on the wall and he hangs the box on it.)*—and say, boys, that reminds me of a pretty good one I heard over at the camp this morning. *(Chuckling with laughter, the men come closer, eager to hear.)* It's about a young married couple who took the Hudson River night boat on their wedding tour to go to Albany. The girl—— *(At the words, "young married couple,"* MIDGE *has entered and comes slowly forward, till the last words, "The girl——"* JOE *sees her.)*

JOE. As h—— (JOE *stops blank, with his mouth wide open, and there's a moment's awkward pause.)*

TEDDY. Hello, Midge.

MIDGE. Hello! Go on. I like jokes on young married folks.

TEDDY. Oh, damn it, Midge—— *(Interrupted.)*

ALL. Aye! aye! A quarter, Boss! A quarter!

TEDDY. Ouch! (MIDGE *does not understand and* TEDDY *rises solemnly and feels for a quarter. Finds a dollar.)* Say, Joe, got change for a dollar? (JOE *feels for his money.)* Better give it to me all in quarters, if you can. I'll be sure to need them. *(Gives* JOE *the dollar for some change and crosses slowly to box. Bus. of change.)*

MIDGE. What's this? Missionaries?

TEDDY. *(Laughing)* Well, I'll be damned if it isn't something like it.

ALL BOYS. *(Laughing)* Put in *two!* Put in *two!*

TEDDY. By—— *(He stops just in time and drops in two quarters.)* Say, I guess I'll have to keep this box just for myself, and get another one for you boys!

RANSOM. It's just occurred to me, Teddy. Who keeps the key?

TEDDY. *(Takes a key from his pocket and gives it to* MIDGE) My *sister*, Midge.

MIDGE. Dear old Mr. Teddy! (MIDGE *on steps.)*

TEDDY. Brother Teddy—from now on!

MIDGE. But what's it fur? The box?

TEDDY. Well, I should judge it was going to be a sort of bank for *my* money! *(All laugh.)*

MIDGE. But when it's full—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupts)* I'll fill it in a week! *(All chuckle.)*

MIDGE. *(Continues)* What will I do with all the money?

TEDDY. Whatever you like! *(Goes down stairs.)*

MIDGE. *(Speaking in a queer little fine and high, mincing voice)* Oh, I know. I'll have a big supper for all the boys, and have the Silverville Band play. Some one race with me to Dead Man's Well? A prize if he gets there five minutes ahead of me! *(All laugh at her voice. She runs like a flash off stage* L. *with a second glance at* JOE.)

TEDDY. Go on, Joe! That prize is meant for you.

RANSOM. Come! I'll run you for it! *(Both men run off* L.*)*

TEDDY. Boys, there's more than one prize in that running! Who's going to win? *(Goes down* C.*)*

WESTON. *(Coming down* C.*)* Oh, damn! What chance can poor Joe have against an educated chap like Ransom?

TEDDY. *(Going up to* WESTON *and taking him by the ear)* You said damn it! Come along and drop in your quarter!

WESTON. What are you talking about? Midge wasn't here!

TEDDY. That's so. Say, was she here when I said it?

WESTON. Of course she was. *(All laugh.)*

TEDDY. Well, you've got to put in a quarter, anyway! *(Pulling him up. Men all crowd around.)*

WESTON. *(Struggling)* Not fair——

TEDDY. Come on, boys! Get the quarter——

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See Page 16

WESTON. *(Shouting)* Not fair! *(All the men in a tussle. They get a half-dollar out of his pocket and force it into his hand.)* That's a half-dollar!

TEDDY. Is it? *(One holding his arm out, they lead* WESTON *to the box and make him drop in the money—with constant laughter and talking.)*

WESTON. *(Half mad)* It's a cheat——

TEDDY. We'll call it two payments in advance.

(DAVE *and* PETE *cross over to* U.L.)

PETE. Hello, there's some-un comin' over the Niagary Pass by the cannon and it ain't safe since them boulders fell—— *(Calls with his hands to his mouth)* Hello, there! Take care! Not safe!

DAVE. He can't hear you from here! *(All have turned with curiosity and are looking off* L.)

WESTON. *(Down* R.) It's a woman!

DAVE. Damned fool!

PETE. She's all right. She's passed the break!

TEDDY. Thank God! *(Wiping his forehead. To* WESTON) It's your wife!

WESTON. My wife—just like her! Always taking the worst chances!

TEDDY. She married *you!*

WESTON. Ha! Ha! Very good. *(Re-enter* JOE.)

TEDDY. Hello, Joe, did you get left?

JOE. *(With a wink at* TEDDY) Yes.

PETE. Oh, come off, Joe!

JOE. Well, it wa'n't no even match. I seen Billy getting winded, so I jest dropped out. (TEDDY *gives* JOE *an affectionate and appreciative pat on the shoulder.)*

PETE. She's coming *here,* Mis' Weston.

WESTON. Is she? My wife! Ta, ta, boys! I'm off! *(Jumps off piazza and off quickly* R.I.)

PETE. Say, he ain't very struck on his wife, is he?

JOE. Nor her on him, not as I blame her. (JOE *lays on rocks* L.)

PETE. Exactly! Nor me, neither, if what they say at the camp is true—nothing in pants but what's good enough for her to flirt with.

DAVE. By Gosh, you're right! She's fly!

JOE. They say every cove in Silverville is stuck on her, and each son of a gun's dead certain she's gone on *him*.

PETE. You can't give no sech impression onless some—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Quietly but emphatically) Mrs. Weston is all right.*

JOE. He's a regular Donny Quixotty, our Boss is!

DAVE. Takes up for all the gals! *(Sits on chair* R.*)*

PETE. There ain't no saying anything again sech behaviors, but they is gals and gals, and—— *(Laughing)* This yere Mis' Weston is a pretty high stepper!

JOE. She can put her clothes in my trunk—— *(Interrupted.* JOE *lies back on bank* L.*)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* The next man that says a word disparaging to Mrs. Weston has got to answer to *me* for it.

JOE. Are you in earnest, Boss? *(Getting up from bank.)*

TEDDY. You put a bet down.

JOE. No, thank you! I'll take your word for it. *(Goes up.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Off* L.*)* Hello! Hello! Good morning, everybody!

TEDDY. Here she is!

MRS. WESTON. Won't somebody come and help me dismount? *(At that same moment everybody except* TEDDY *makes a leap off the porch and off* L.U.

The reply to her call is made so quickly and so eagerly, in fact, that it becomes a concerted movement. TEDDY *watches them go.* MRS. WESTON *laughs merrily.)*

TEDDY. Will she miss me from among them? Bah! She always guys the life out of me! *(Shouts of "Hurrah!" from all the men and shouts of "Bravo!" from* MRS. WESTON *as they join her.* TEDDY *shrugs his shoulders and says, sort of hopelessly, and yet half laughing at himself)* Miss me! It sounds like it! Damn it! I don't even exist for her! *(Goes up to porch—sits on chair.)*

(MIDGE *and* RANSOM *reappear* L. TEDDY *doesn't notice them.* MIDGE *stops* R.L.)

MIDGE. *(Softly to* RANSOM) Look at Mr. Teddy!

RANSOM. What's the matter?

MIDGE. Ain't you got on—yet?

RANSOM. No, I "ain't." *(With a slight emphasis on the "ain't.")*

(MIDGE *looks up at him quickly, smiling knowingly.)*

MIDGE. "Ain't" was wrong. Ain't it funny, every time *you* say a wrong word, now, I can tell in a minute. But with me it's the *right* ones as sounds wrong. I ought've said aren't you got on.

RANSOM. *(Smiling)* No—haven't you got on?

MIDGE. You don't say! Well, I'll tell you, anyways, what's the matter with Mister Teddy. He's dead gone on someone.

RANSOM. Who?

MIDGE. Mis' Weston.

RANSOM. No!

MIDGE. Hope to die!

TEDDY. *(Looks up and sees them)* Hello, you back already? So *Billy* got the prize!

MIDGE. *(Quite unconscioulsy)* Yes, I kissed him. It wasn't much of a prize.

JOE. *(Calls just off stage* L.U.*)* Hey, Boss! She says as she won't come any further unless you give a spechule invite.

MRS. WESTON. *(Off stage)* No, after all, I change my mind. *(She enters* L.U., *followed and surrounded by the men. She crosses to porch.)* Ah! Midge! Good morning, Mr. Ransom—and greeting to your Royal Highness! *(With a low curtsey to* TEDDY, *who is terribly embarrassed.)*

TEDDY. Good morning!

MRS. WESTON. I offer my hand to Your Majesty to kiss! *(Holding out her* L. *hand, which is bare—notices clothes, looks him over from head to foot.)* Dear me, *another* suit on to-day! And what a suit!

TEDDY. *(Dying to kiss it really, but ashamed and embarrassed with all the other men standing around)* Don't—don't, please—don't make a fool of me *all* the time!

MRS. WESTON. You don't want to kiss my hand, or can't you bend over? You'll let my hand go unkissed? *(All the other men rush forward, crying "I will!" and "Let me!" but* MRS. WESTON *motions them all away.)* No, it's for his dudeship only.

(TEDDY *seizes her hand quickly and shamefacedly kisses it.* MRS. WESTON *curtsies low, which increases* TEDDY'S *embarrassment.* JOE *with* MIDGE L.*)*

MRS. WESTON. Thank you. Why wouldn't you come to meet me with the others? *(She looks him over.)* Oh! I see—afraid of spoiling your boots! *(All men laugh good-naturedly.* TEDDY *looks at her for a moment, grinding his teeth in his rage, so as*

not to swear or say something he will regret, turns on his heel and goes into the house without a word.) Isn't he splendid! No *woman could* have held her tongue!

RANSOM. But why are you so hard on him?

MRS. WESTON. I don't know. I can't help it. It's the old Nick in me that will out! Go bring him back, Midge. (MIDGE *goes off* R. *into the house. To* RANSOM) I'll try not to tease him this time.

RANSOM. Do try. It's only fair to him.

MRS. WESTON. But why *is* he such a dandy?

RANSOM. Perhaps it amuses him as much as it does you?

MRS. WESTON. But what does he do among all you big strong men? I should think he'd be afraid of you! *(Laugh.)*

RANSOM. *(Amused)* Oh, would you?

MRS. WESTON. I suppose he's the ranch "baby," as you all coddle and spoil him?

RANSOM. *(Still amused)* You don't know him!

MRS. WESTON. Oh, yes, I know he's clever and amusing, but of course he couldn't hold his own with the others. One of them must fight his battles for him. *(She stops speaking as* TEDDY *re-enters with* MIDGE.)

TEDDY. *(Aside to* MIDGE, *whose hand he holds)* Stay by me! I'm afraid of her!

MRS. WESTON. *(Going to* TEDDY) Mr. North, forgive me! *(Holds out her hand.)*

TEDDY. *(Surprised and putting his hands behind his back)* On one condition.

MRS. WESTON. What? *(Dropping her hand.)*

TEDDY. That you don't ask me to kiss your hand! *(Holding out his hand.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Takes his hand) Never* again!

TEDDY. *(Dropping her hand quickly)* Oh, I don't exactly mean *that,* either!

MRS. WESTON. I was only afraid you were going

to ask me to kiss *your* hand—— But now I'll tell you what I've come for.

TEDDY. One moment, please! How about our cocktail? Don't we get our cocktail to-day?

JOE. Of course we do!

PETE. Bet your life!

RANSOM. Hear! Hear!

DAVE. Yes! Yes! *(All this at the same time.)*

MRS. WESTON. Of course! If you can stand another of my cocktails, I'm willing!

MIDGE. I'll fetch the liquor and glasses.

JOE. *(Calls as* MIDGE *is going)* Fetch the backy, too, Midge. (MIDGE *exits into house.)*

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) Midge is one of us now. She is going to be my sister.

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing)* What? Going to be a sister! Did you ask her to marry you? *(She keeps on laughing.)*

TEDDY. No, but suppose I had? I don't see anything funny in my making a proposal of marriage! (RANSOM *on porch* L., *smoking pipe*—DAVE *on porch seated.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing so she can hardly speak)* But I *do!* It seems to me awfully funny! *(Laughing.)*

TEDDY. Suppose I should propose to you?

MRS. WESTON. *(Still laughing so she can hardly speak)* Oh, no—no! Thank heaven, *I am married.* I'd die in hysterics if you did! *(Continues laughing.)*

TEDDY. *(Angry, insulted) Thank you!*

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing)* You're—welcome—*(Laughing.)*

(Re-enter MIDGE *with a large black tin tray. On it is a miscellaneous collection of glasses, all sorts and all sizes, one white coffee cup —no saucer— and one jam-jar; enough of these receptacles to make one for each; also a very large cocktail*

shaker—silver; two whiskey bottles, a vermouth bottle, one small piece of ice wrapped in a golf-coat, and a bottle of angustura bitters. She also brings a box of tobacco.)

MIDGE. Here's the things. *(She places them on chair near* C.*)*

MRS. WESTON. And I hope I'll have better luck this time! *(Takes a seat near the chair with the tray on it. The men fill their pipes up stage; light them during the following scene between* TEDDY *and* MRS. WESTON.*)*

TEDDY. Yes, last time, if you remember, you put the vermouth in twice, and *no whiskey!*

MRS. WESTON. I remember perfectly—you made eyes at me and embarrassed me so I didn't know what I was doing.

TEDDY. *You—embarrassed by me!* I embarrassed *you?* Well, I'll be—— *(He stops himself short with a look at the box on the wall.)*

MRS. WESTON. You *will* be, I'm afraid, *some* day!

TEDDY. Saved a quarter—that time, boys—— *(All laugh. She begins shaking the cocktails, first pouring in glass of whiskey.)*

MRS. WESTON. What I came over for was to ask you all to dance at the hall in Silverville. *(Sugar.)*

MIDGE. Molly Larkins? *(Whiskey.)*

MRS. WESTON. Some time from now, to be sure—three weeks from Tuesday.

JOE. Molly ain't giving up her place to you-uns alone, be she?

MRS. WESTON. Yes. Weston had some difficulty persuading her. He's been over every day, and yesterday she consented.

PETE. I'd seed he was there every day.

MRS. WESTON. Oh, very likely Miss Larkin herself was some attraction! You know my Weston!

I shall have some New York friends *visiting* me, and I want to show them everything—including Mr. Teddy! *(With a mischievous look and smile at* TEDDY *The shaker is full of whiskey.)*

TEDDY. Excuse me, but the cocktails 'r' *all whiskey* this time, to counter-balance the vermouth day, I suppose?

MRS. WESTON. *(Holding up the shaker and seeing that it is full)* Oh, dear! How stupid of me! *(She looks around helplessly.)* And there's nothing to pour all this extra whiskey into!

TEDDY. Oh, yes, there is! There's Joe! He can hold any amount. *(All laugh.)*

JOE. *(Holding out one of the tumblers)* "Never say die!"

MRS. WESTON. *(Pours out half as she talks, and* JOE, *when she finishes, gulps it down at one gulp.* MRS. WESTON *fills the shaker with vermouth.)* You must all come to the dance with your ranch things. No man admitted in his "store clothes." I don't want any make-believe ranchman around! There's a blow for *you,* Mr. Teddy!

TEDDY. But it won't "kill father"! I haven't said I was coming!

MRS. WESTON. Oh, but you must, and you can borrow some real clothes of Joe—can't he, Joe? *(*JOE *is very much taller and very much bigger than* TEDDY.*)*

JOE. Yes, ma'am—suttenly—if he'll promise not to *stretch* them!

TEDDY. Oh, if I come I'll wear Joe's clothes with pleasure. *(All laugh.)*

MRS. WESTON. You promise—Joe's clothes?

TEDDY. I promise.

MRS. WESTON. We women are going to pay you for the compliment by appearing in our very smartest frocks——

JOE. Hully gee!

TEDDY. *(As* MRS. WESTON *starts to put on the cover of the shaker)* Excuse me—the ice! We had some here a week ago Thursday. *(He picks up the golf coat and unrolls it, and finds a small piece of ice.)*

MRS. WESTON. Shall I put it all in?

TEDDY. Yes, let's be *reckless! (They put in the ice and* MRS. WESTON *shakes the shaker.* TEDDY *kneels at her side,* R., *hat off.)*

MRS. WESTON. I expect *you* to dance the *whole evening,* while the other men are making love to the girls in the moonlight.

TEDDY. A nice *warm* prospect for me! (MRS. WESTON *laughs.)* And where will *you* be?

MRS. WESTON. I? Oh, of course, *out in the moonlight!*

TEDDY. With two of the other men! *(She pours out the drinks.* TEDDY *tries to speak back, but is so angry he can't. He glares at her a moment, opens his lips to speak, but no words come. He grits his teeth, then turns and goes straight to the box on the wall with his back to the audience. He raises both hands above his head, with clenched fists and the gesture of a violent oath, and then deliberately drops in a quarter which is heard to fall. Big laugh. The scene is played without a word, and during it* MRS. WESTON *has poured out all the drinks.)*

TEDDY. *(Coming back and noticing* MRS. WESTON *is pouring out the cocktails)* I beg your pardon, but did you remember the bitters?

MRS. WESTON. Oh, what a shame! I was getting on so nicely! *(She begins pouring them all back into the shaker. The men are amused.)*

TEDDY. Oh, never mind. We're used to hardships here!

MRS. WESTON. No, I shall make it all over. *(She takes up the bitters bottle and begins putting the bitters in.)* But I think it would have been more polite

of you not to mention the bitters. *(The men at first do not take any particular notice, but as she keeps on putting the bitters in they show excitement and curiosity and then despair. She finally notices them. Big laugh.)* Now what's the matter? Have I put in too much?

TEDDY. Oh, no—no——

MRS. WESTON. Never mind. It'll do you good. Where's the lemon? (TEDDY *exits into the house as* MRS. WESTON *begins shaking again; she sees him go and knows he goes for the lemon.)* You see, I haven't forgotten that! Oh, I shall make famous cocktails in time!

(Re-enter TEDDY *with a tiny round, hard yellow ball, white in spots where peel has been cut off.* MRS. WESTON *begins to pour out the cocktails.)*

TEDDY. Allow me to offer you the *ranch lemon! (Offering it to her.)* Do you play golf?

MRS. WESTON. *(Taking lemon)* Thank you! *(Laughing.)* I must send you some if you are so bad off as all this! *(Gives it back to him.)* Won't you?

TEDDY. With pleasure! *(Takes lemon and a knife which is on the tray, and with difficulty manages to cut off bits of lemon peel and put one in each glass as she fills it.)*

MRS. WESTON. Mr. Ransom! *(Giving him his cocktail.)*

RANSOM. Thanks.

MRS. WESTON. *(Giving* PETE *a glass)* Pete!

PETE. Thank you.

MRS. WESTON. *(With a mischievous glance at* TEDDY *as she fills the next glass)* Don't cut yourself! *(He looks up at her, angry.)* What nice little hands you have, anyway!

TEDDY. *(Angry)* Mrs. Weston!

MRS. WESTON. Here, Joe! *(Giving him his cocktail.)*

JOE. Thank you!

MRS. WESTON. *(To* TEDDY) Nice for kid gloves, I mean—and lawn tennis or croquette! Do you play croquette? *(Giving cocktail.)* Here, Dave!

DAVE. Thank ye!

MRS. WESTON. *(Continuing her speech to* TEDDY) But what in the world do you do with them out here? (MIDGE *passes drinks to men.)*

TEDDY. Mrs. Weston, you are—— No, I won't say it! I mustn't forget there are *gentlemen* present. *(With a movement toward the men. Men laugh.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Who has finished pouring out the cocktails, but has not left any for the last glass)* Oh, what a pity! Again! I thought I was measuring so carefully, and here I haven't left a drop for *you!*

TEDDY. *(Rising)* Excuse me, but that's the *only kindness* you've done me to-day!

MRS. WESTON. What! You make fun of my cocktails? Then you must take some! I'll share with you! We'll drink mine together.

TEDDY. *(Delighted)* Out of the same glass! Bully!

MRS. WESTON. Oh, no! *(Pouring out half of her cocktail into the other glass.)* That way. *(Gives him glass.)*

TEDDY. *(Disgustedly)* Thank you!

JOE. Here's "How!" Mis' Weston!

MRS. WESTON. "How!" *(They all clink glasses together—and all drink but* MRS. WESTON. *All cannot help making a wry face over the bitterness of the drink. All "Ugh!"—shuddering. They surround* TEDDY *and each head is moved emphatically with a whispered oath. Big laugh. They then go in a body to the swear-box and all drop in nickels at*

the same time. They come back, shuddering at intervals.)

MRS. WESTON. What's the matter? Wasn't it good? *(All make grimaces.)*

TEDDY. Good is not the word! Ugh!

JOE. Oh, ma'am! Ugh! *(He makes a face.)*

MRS. WESTON. Then I shan't drink any! Here! *(Giving her glass to* TEDDY.) I'll be generous! You shall have *all mine! (Just as she gives the glass she takes it back to kiss the edge and then gives it to* TEDDY.)

TEDDY. Thank you! *(Smiling, drinks it.)* Delicious! *(Men "Gee whiz!" etc.)*

MRS. WESTON. My dear Mr. North, you're braver than I thought!

MIDGE. Well, you all hev my sympathies! I can't swallow the best! Whiskey's good enough for me! *(All men laugh.)*

RANSOM. Midge! Mrs. Weston will think you a toper!

MRS. WESTON. *(Rising)* Oh, no! Midge has confided to me in secret that whiskey gives her the hiccoughs and the brandy "shivers" even before she tastes it!

MIDGE. *(Naïvely—all move)* Oh, but I ain't no temperance fiend! My pop jes' lives on both of 'em. I've heard folks say as how pop's whiskey was the worst this side of the Rockies! *(All laugh. Bus. of* TEDDY *giving different men orders up stage.)*

MRS. WESTON. You funny little creature! *(Putting her arm around her, she takes her to one side.)* Tell me, dear—are you all right here? Will you be happy?

MIDGE. *(Aside to* MRS. WESTON) Oh, yes! Awful happy! Both of 'em's so good to me!

MRS. WESTON. If you ever want a woman friend, come to me. I like you!

MIDGE. Yes, m'm—I like you, too! I'm always

telling the boys you ain't half so bad as you seem.

MRS. WESTON. *(Amused)* Oh, really! *Do* you tell the boys that?

MIDGE. Yes, ma'am—your real, true friend. You're only after a good time, like the rest of us. I know what a good time means to a girl. I couldn't live without my rifle—and—Joe—— *(Looking down.)*

MRS. WESTON. Ah-ha! Somebody's been taking a shot at *you* with an arrow! *(She shakes both hands.)* Remember, dear, *I'm your friend.*

MIDGE. And I'm yourn! (TEDDY *top of steps.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(To the men)* Well, boys, will you all come to my dance?

JOE. I'll answer for them, ma'm, and the cove that wants to back out'll hev to *settle* with *me* first!

MRS. WESTON. Thank you. That settles *you,* Mr. Teddy! *You* can't desert me now! (TEDDY *merely smiles and bows.)* Who'll get my horse ready for me? (DAVE, PETE, JOE *and* RANSOM *exit quickly.)*

MIDGE. *(Going to* MRS. WESTON) Say, Brother Teddy can knock the spots out of Joe!

MRS. WESTON. Don't be absurd! Good-bye! (MIDGE *takes tray into the house and arranges chair* C. MRS. WESTON *leaves porch.)*

TEDDY. *(Following her)* You won't take the same road, will you? It isn't safe!

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing)* Oh, thank you for your advice, I'm sure!

TEDDY. *(Earnestly)* But you'll take it? The *advice,* I mean—not the road!

MRS. WESTON. *(Smiling)* Oh, that's quite another thing!

TEDDY. It's dangerous, terribly dangerous!

MRS. WESTON. I'm not afraid, Mr. North.

TEDDY. But it was a miracle you escaped—even *we* go the other way. (MRS. WESTON *laughs.)* If your horse should stumble just the slightest, over

you'd go! And it's three hundred feet to the bottom! Ask the men, if you won't listen to me.

MRS. WESTON. The men have all gone to *help* me mount. If *they* warn me, perhaps I'll listen. *But I like danger.* Good-bye, my timid Mr. Teddy. *(She exits gaily.)*

(MIDGE *goes to* TEDDY.)

MIDGE. Don't she beat the band? But—don't be afraid. They ain't going to let her go back the same way. (MRS. WESTON *and the men are heard talking and laughing as she mounts.)* Why don't you help her mount?

TEDDY. Humph! You see how she treats me, Midge!

MIDGE. Yep. There's times as it jes' makes me hate her! *(Coming down.)*

TEDDY. *(Smiling)* You needn't do that, Midge—because, Midge—dear little sister—your fool of a brother *loves* her.

MIDGE. I *told* Mr. Ransom so!

TEDDY. What?

MIDGE. And he wouldn't believe it.

TEDDY. But how——

MIDGE. Oh, a woman can tell.

TEDDY. *(Smiling)* Say, how *old are you,* please, Miss? *(L.)*

MIDGE. I don't know exactly. *(R.—sits on front of steps.)*

TEDDY. And how long have you been a "woman"? *(Sits on R.)*

MIDGE. About eight years. Since the first time as I found Pop drunk. Do you think Pop will miss me?

TEDDY. No——

MIDGE. Do you think he'll come here after me?

TEDDY. No.

MIDGE. I don't want him to, and yet—— *(Her voice breaking.)* I'm afraid he'll be dreadful lonely. You see, even animals won't stay by Pop. He don't know how to treat 'em. He bangs 'em around jes' like he used to me, and you can't do that with animals and keep 'em loving you. I'm sorter afraid—Oh, Mr. Teddy, perhaps I didn't ought to leave him!

TEDDY. *(Getting up from steps)* Don't worry about that, little sister. It's *he* that has left you.

MIDGE. *(Getting up from bank* R.*—brightening up)* How do you mean?

TEDDY. He's gone away, far away!

MIDGE. Pop? Where to?

TEDDY. *(A moment's hesitation)* Nobody knows—but they say he'll never come back to *bang* anybody, not even the dogs, any more. *(She looks up at him, half startled—half guessing the truth. Her gaze becomes more frightened. Finally she speaks.)*

MIDGE. You don't mean——?

TEDDY. *(Speaks very softly and kindly)* Don't ask any more questions, little sister—because I can't answer them. *(He kisses her on the forehead. The men are heard shouting, "Good-bye! Good-bye!" answered by* MRS. WESTON.*)* Here come the boys back! (MIDGE *is half dazed. She goes slowly into the house* R.*)*

RANSOM. *(Entering first, followed by* JOE, DAVE *and* PETE) Teddy, the fellows are hungry.

TEDDY. All right, Joe. Did you tell Mrs. Weston not to take the same road back?

JOE. She said you'd warned her, but her head's level enough—she ain't a-goin' to run no risks!

PETE. Say, I heard a good one this morning. I want to tell you all now they're no woman folks around. What's the difference between an Indian and a bull pup? *(A moment's pause.)*

TEDDY. What?

PETE. What's the difference between an Indian and a bull pup?

TEDDY. You *got* me. *(A moment's pause.)*

PETE. Why, an Indian——

TEDDY. Ssh! *(As* MIDGE *enters. She says, "Boys!" She comes on to porch a step and looks in surprise at the men, who are silent.)*

MIDGE. Oh, my! Ain't it funny you boys don't never seem to have a word to say unless I come and start talk a-going?

TEDDY. They're hungry, aren't you, boys?

JOE. Yes. Come on.

(JOE, PETE *and* DAVE *go into the house.* RANSOM *joins* MIDGE. TEDDY *has gone to* L. *and looks off.* TEDDY, *turning, sees* MIDGE *and* RANSOM *together; he raises his eyebrows and smiles, nodding his head significantly, and starts to tiptoe into the house, too.* RANSOM *sees him.* MIDGE *stands with her back toward them.)*

RANSOM. Teddy! (TEDDY *stops and, looking at* RANSOM, *pantomimes not to say anything, that he understands and he will get out and leave them alone together.)* No, no—— *(Joins* TEDDY *and speaks aside to him. They are* L., MIDGE R.) It won't do, old man. She won't listen to me. There's someone else!

TEDDY. Nonsense!

RANSOM. Joe!

TEDDY. Joe instead of you! Stuff! Say, leave her alone with me!

RANSOM. Be careful. If she don't care for me, I don't want her to know that I—I worship the ground her feet touch. *(Going* R.) It would spoil it all here.

TEDDY. *(Taking the practical view of it)* Go on,

leave her with me! (RANSOM *goes into the house.)*

(TEDDY *steals playfully over behind* MIDGE *and says "Boo!" to startle her.)*

MIDGE. Oh, Brother! *(Starts, frightened, with a little cry and turns to* TEDDY*—she throws her arms around his neck and bursts into tears.)*

TEDDY. *(Embarrassed and sympathetic)* Hello! Hello! What's up?

MIDGE. *(Crying)* Nothing! *(Going* C. *to box.* MIDGE *sits* L. TEDDY *sits* R.*)*

TEDDY. *(Holding her two hands)* Oh, come now! *(He sits.)* Say, is it Billy?

MIDGE. No. *(Stops crying—she sits on a box at his feet.)*

TEDDY. That's right, stop crying. I want to have a little talk with you. Are you fond of Billy?

MIDGE. Yes—no—I mean, not exactly—some!

TEDDY. *(Smiling)* Well, that answer is out of sight literally!

MIDGE. *(Shyly, half humorously)* Don't you think Joe's a handsomer man?

TEDDY. But Billy's a gentleman, and—— *(Interrupted.)*

MIDGE. *(Interrupting)* So's Joe.

TEDDY. That's true. Has Joe spoken?

MIDGE. No, it seems as if he ain't got the sand. I think he wants to.

TEDDY. It takes a lot to tell a woman you love her. Still, Joe's all right. You ain't married—and to a blackguard! *(The last word is only a whisper.)*

MIDGE. Cheer up, Brother Teddy. Everybody says as how Mr. Weston's a-drinkin' himself to death sure!

TEDDY. That wouldn't surprise me, if *she* mixes his drinks! But even if she weren't married, there'd

be another drink needed to make me happy—something for *her*—a love potion.

MIDGE. *(Smiling)* Oh—fairy-tales——

TEDDY. Yes, but they make a nice life.

MIDGE. But *you* ain't got no right to think about her. She *is* married.

TEDDY. And doesn't love me, anyway. *I'll forget her.* I'll forget her! *(He speaks the first "I'll forget her!" seriously, then, after a moment's pause, he smiles to himself and repeats, "I'll forget her!" in a tone implying the awful responsibility to him of his doing so. There's a moment's silence. Then* MIDGE *steals her hand into his and says encouragingly, sweet and softly—)*

MIDGE. It ain't easy, but let's try! (TEDDY *presses her hand for answer, another moment's silence and then, looking down at her, he speaks—)*

TEDDY. Sing that little song.

MIDGE. Which?

TEDDY. You know, my favorite—— *(Singing)* "I love a lovely girl, I do."

MIDGE. *(Smiling)* That ain't exactly a good beginnin' for forgettin'.

TEDDY. We won't count till after the song.

(MIDGE *sings softly, "I love a lovely girl, I do, and I have loved a girl or two."* TEDDY *nods his head.* MIDGE *begins again and sings. At the first line he looks affectionately at her and then turns his eyes and gazes off* L., *where* MRS. WESTON *went. As she sings, "I know how a girl should be loved," he joins her in "You bet I do!" and sings the rest with her softly, till the note before the last, when he breaks off suddenly.)*

TEDDY. *(Rising)* Good God! There she goes on the land-slide again!

(MIDGE *has also stopped and, rising, stands beside him, watching off* L.)

TEDDY. The dare-devil! *(He gives a loud cry of terror, echoed by* MIDGE, *as they both start violently.)* I knew it! Don't tell the boys! I can save her alone! *(Exits, crying out)* Hold on! Help's coming! Hold on! Hold on! *(As his voice dies away, music pp. twice through.)*

(MIDGE *stands* L., *paralyzed. As* TEDDY *cried out and jumped off the porch, she has started also with a cry of terror, and for an instant has shut her eyes and covered them with her hands. Slowly she takes her hands from her face and opens her eyes.)*

MIDGE. She is caught on that ledge! If she's only got the grit to hold on!

(The men re-enter from the house.)

JOE. Well, we're off! What's up?

MIDGE. *(Whispers)* Look!

JOE. What? Hello! A woman! *(All the men look with him.)*

PETE. Hanging just over the edge of the cannon!

JOE. *(A whisper)* God! Come on, boys—— *(All make a movement to go off the porch.)*

MIDGE. *(Blocks their way)* No! No! You shan't go!

JOE. What's the matter with the girl?

PETE. Out of the way! *(Moves forward.* JOE *pushes him back.)*

MIDGE. *(Almost beside herself) No!* Let Mr. Teddy save her alone——

JOE. *(Jumping off bank)* He's after her? *(He crosses* C.)

MIDGE. Yes, you'll see him in a minute. It's Mrs. Weston!

PETE. Come on anyway! *(Moves forward again.* JOE *pushes him back.)*

JOE. No!

DAVE. Has she tried to pull herself up?

MIDGE. No, she ain't moved—prob'ly she's fainted.

JOE. A good thing, for if she moved that bit of ledge might crumble too, and she'd—— *(He breaks off.)*

MIDGE. *(Adds in even a lower whisper)* She'd *follow* the *horse!*

JOE. The horse is——?

MIDGE. At the bottom! Joe—suppose he leans over, after, and the ledge gives away and both of 'em—— *(She breaks off.)*

JOE. Yes! *(Turns and calls)* Pete, Dave!

MIDGE. There he is! He's in sight now! Riding sunshine!

JOE. *(Jumps off porch quickly and exits calling)* Come on quick! *(They turn off quickly* L.*)*

(Enter RANSOM.*)*

RANSOM. Where're they off to?

MIDGE. Come look!

RANSOM. Where?

MIDGE. There! Don't you see? (RANSOM *joins her—he doesn't see at once, but looks a moment, sees, and takes in what it means.)*

RANSOM. Good heavens! Who is it?

MIDGE. *(Softly)* Mis' Weston.

RANSOM. And the man—Teddy?

MIDGE. Yes. He's going to save her. Don't I tell you he loves her?

RANSOM. But what can he do? They'll both go down together. *(Forgetting himself and speaking*

as if to TEDDY) Lie flat down! That's right! Be careful!

MIDGE. *(In an agony of fear)* He'll slip!

(RANSOM *starts to go off* L. MIDGE *holds him back.)*

RANSOM. Teddy has caught hold of her!

MIDGE. But she's falling!

RANSOM. And he—— (MIDGE *interrupts with a loud cry.)* No, it's all right. He's hangin' on! On to that ledge——

MIDGE. But that's where she was, and it gave away!

RANSOM. His grip'll be stronger! God help you, Teddy! There's the men!

MIDGE. Yes—Joe ahead! Oh, I can't see! *(She waves.)*

RANSOM. Joe's thrown his coat! Teddy has hold of it! They're all right!

(MIDGE *drops slowly and softly to the ground with a faint.)*

RANSOM. Midge! Midge dear! *(Lifting her up.)* They're safe, both safe! *(He fans her with his hat. He cautiously, tenderly steals a kiss from her cheek—goes on fanning her. She revives.)*

MIDGE. Teddy's safe?

RANSOM. Yes. *(As she goes from his arms.)*

MIDGE. *(Disgusted with herself)* I suppose I fainted! For goodness' sakes, don't tell the boys, will you? *(Noise.)* They're bringing her back. *(Rising.)* I'm afraid she's hurt. *(Sitting on bank.)*

RANSOM. No, probably *she's* only fainted, too.

MIDGE. *(Half laughing)* That'll sorter keep me comp'ny! Well, she oughtn't to treat Mr. Teddy so

mean, anyhow—not after to-day. He almost died for her! Here's Dave.

RANSOM. *(Calls)* Anybody hurt? (DAVE *enters.)*

DAVE. No. Mrs. Weston's fainted, but I guess she ain't hurt. Git a place ready for her inside, Midge. (MIDGE *exits quickly.)*

DAVE. *(Coming down* C.*)* Plucky thing of the boss—went right over the ledge. God knows why they didn't both go down afore we-uns got there.

(PETE *and* JOE *enter, making a chair with their hands, in which half sits and half lies* MRS. WESTON, *still in a fainting condition. She is partially held up by* TEDDY *with his left hand. His right arm hangs limp—broken—by his side, unnoticed by the other men or by him.* DAVE *holds door open and* RANSOM *goes to help with* MRS. WESTON. *As they appear* DAVE *calls—)*

DAVE. Here they are, Midge.

MIDGE. *(Inside)* All ready!

RANSOM. *(To* TEDDY*)* God bless you, Teddy! Are you hurt?

TEDDY. Not a damn bit! Here, take my place. She's riviving, and I don't want her to see me now. *(They exchange places as they carry* MRS. WESTON *into the house.* TEDDY *stands in doorway and calls softly.* RANSOM *exits house* R.*)*

TEDDY. Midge! (MIDGE, *in doorway, throws her arms around his neck and kisses and hugs him for a moment. After a minute, a little choky)* There! That's all right!

MIDGE. *(Tearful)* I saw! I saw!

TEDDY. Did you? Ah! Listen! *(He whispers in her ear. Her face expresses surprise and disappointment.)* You understand, don't you? *Not one word.* You needn't fib. You can just refuse to an-

swer if she asks you. *(He pushes her gently into the house.)* Tell the fellows to come right out here and you stay with her.

(MIDGE *goes into house. At the same time the men come out in turn.* PETE *first,* JOE, DAVE *and men cross to* L.C.)

TEDDY. *(Eagerly, anxiously)* Look here, boys! I want you to give me your word, each one of you, you won't tell Mrs. Weston it was I went over the ledge after her. Do you understand?

JOE. No, blamed if I do!

TEDDY. I wouldn't have her know I did it for anything.

PETE. Yes, but——

TEDDY. She'd guy the life out of me.

DAVE. For savin' her life!

JOE. At the risk—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* No, no! Listen! I could not stand her thanking me. I wouldn't have her feel under any *such* obligation to me. Why, can't you see, boys? I don't know as I can explain—but it's sort of taking a mean advantage of her for *me* to put her in a position like that! I couldn't look her in the face if she knew—— I'd feel so—— I don't know how I'd feel—but I'd a good deal rather she went on guying me! Why don't some of you help me out? Joe, don't you know what I mean?

JOE. Well, I sorter does and I sorter don't. Of course, we'd all do most anything for you, but——

PETE. Exactly. It ain't easy for some o' us to stand up and take the blame for what you done!

TEDDY. Oh, come! What difference will it make? It'd be so much easier for *her* to thank *one of you.*

DAVE. It's damn like lying——

JOE. I'd feel a dirty sneak!

TEDDY. Well, as long as you aren't one, you might

be willing to *feel* one, just for my sake. Come on! Will you promise me? Don't give me away! Eh! Sh! Here she is!. I'm going to sneak. *(Exits* R.U.E.*)*

(As MIDGE *and* MRS. WESTON *come on together from the house,* MRS. WESTON *has* MIDGE'S *arm, but though she is pale and her hair disordered, and her riding-habit torn and clay-covered, she is herself again.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Goes* C. *and then sits on rock above steps)* Well, boys, I'm all right now, thanks to all of you—and alive still in this blessed world, which never seemed so precious to me—*thanks to one of you.* You must tell me who that one is. All I remember was the shock of my poor horse's stumble as over we rolled and down, down we went! *Poor* beast! In that moment the sky was a sweeter blue than I'd ever seen it, and the trees the greenest, the earth a Paradise, and I thought to lose it! Then I saw the arm of a man come over the ledge. It was like the arm of God to me, and then what seemed the man himself followed; then a haze hid everything and I thought I was falling, falling down after my horse! The next thing I knew I was here in the dear, strong arms of you fellows! Thank you, Joe! (JOE *shakes his head.)* Thank you, Pete! (PETE *shakes his head.)* Thank you, Dave! But which of you came over the ledge? Come, don't be modest. I must know. Tell me. *(She waits. There is a silence.)* Oh, come—please! Two of you must give the other away. *(Enter* TEDDY *at back softly. They are all terribly embarrassed and most eager to tell the truth.)*

MRS. WESTON. Joe—Pete—Dave! Who was it?

JOE. We've agreed not to tell which one done it, ma'am.

MRS. WESTON. But I won't have that. I *must* know!

(The men look at TEDDY *for a softening in him, but he still looks a hard refusal at them and shakes his head.)*

PETE. Very sorry, ma'am, but we've agreed.

DAVE. And it won't be no good pumping. Very sorry, ma'am.

MRS. WESTON. Well, boys, I respect your modesty, but I'd like to know, and shan't give up trying to find out. *(She adds mischievously)* This very moment I'd like to kiss the man, and would if I knew which one he was!

(TEDDY *on run* R.U.E. *The men are very much embarrassed, and* TEDDY, *rolling his eyes up, expresses that this is a test almost too great for him to stand.)*

TEDDY. You might kiss us all around, on the chance o' hittin' the right one.

MRS. WESTON. There wouldn't be any merit in it if it was so general, but that is not a bad idea. *(Bus. of kissing three men.* JOE *is called up and kissed by* MRS. WESTON, *then* DAVE *and then* PETE, *each showing different types of embarrassment, except* PETE, *who is willing and anxious.* TEDDY *goes to get kissed.)* My dear Mr. Teddy, you *are not* in the ring!

MIDGE. Oh, Mrs. Weston, he was there—— *(She stops short, warned by* TEDDY.)

MRS. WESTON. Yes, as I came to I saw him carrying *my hat! (She bows mock graciously to* TEDDY.) *Thank you* for saving my hat! Ah! How rude I am to you, and misjudged you. Popular as you are with these brave boys, there must be something in

you which *I* failed to bring out. *My* fault! (TEDDY *bows and goes up and off* R. *She turns to* MIDGE.) Good-bye, dear. *(Aside to her)* It was your Joe. I'm almost sure, bless him—and *you,* Joe—you will have to lend me a horse, and will you see me home? After all, I feel a little shaky. Good-bye, all! And thank you again, with all my heart! *(Growing emotional again)* I wish I could say more what I feel! Good-bye! *(Exit* DAVE *into the house.)* I hope I've kissed the right man!

(TEDDY *enters and meets* JOE, *who exchanges a look with him.* TEDDY *shakes his head at* JOE, *who exits* L. PETE *goes to* TEDDY *and offers his hand.)*

PETE. Shake, Boss! (TEDDY *wishes to shake hands, but finds he cannot raise* R. *arm.)*

TEDDY. Why! Hello! I—I can't——

PETE. Can't you raise your arm, sir?

TEDDY. And it pains—I didn't realize—I didn't know! *(He is white and shows that he suffers.)*

MIDGE. You're hurt! You're hurt!

TEDDY. Oh, no, only——

PETE. *(Touching his arm softly—*TEDDY *winces)* You've broken your arm!

TEDDY. What! The devil! I believe I have!

PETE. It ought to be set at once.

MIDGE. But there ain't no doctor for miles!

TEDDY. Oh, never mind! It isn't so much—— *(He is getting weaker.)*

PETE. Yes, it is! It ought to be tended to this minute! I ain't exactly a doctor, but if you don't mind my bein' a bit rough I kin set it somehow or other for you. It ain't the *first* time. Shall I try?

TEDDY. Oh, yes. Have a go at it.

MIDGE. It'll hurt! It'll hurt!

TEDDY. No, it won't. It'll be fun! *(He sits down*

to save himself from falling.) Come on, Midge, and sit down here and hold your brother's off hand.

(MIDGE *sits at* TEDDY'S *feet at his* L. *and takes his hand and holds it.)*

PETE. You'll have to peel your coat, Boss.

TEDDY. *(Rising)* Go on! (PETE *takes hold of coat with a sort of rough gentleness.* TEDDY *winces terribly with the pain and cries out) Cut* it off! Cut, damn you! *(He stops short as he realizes the word and steals a look over his shoulder to the swear-box.)* Wait a minute! *(He rises and with difficulty with his left hand gets a quarter from his vest pocket and goes to the swear-box and drops it in.* PETE *has taken out a big jack-knife to cut with.* TEDDY *comes back and sits again with a smile and wink at* MIDGE.) All ready! *(Aside to* MIDGE) Sing, dear, will you?

(PETE *finds a good place at the top of the sleeve.* MIDGE *starts singing in a pathetic little voice—"I love a lovely girl, I do," etc.* TEDDY *at once turns his face and gazes off* L.U. *where* MRS. WESTON *went, pressing* MIDGE'S *hand tight.* PETE *cuts down the sleeve.* TEDDY *winces and takes up the song through his clenched teeth with* MIDGE *as the—)*

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE: *A fortnight later. The dance hall in Silverville. It is a large bare room with a bar across* L. *At back* L. *of* C. *a large double door open. Outside a porch with staircase descending toward* R. *The hall being on the second story,* R. *of* C. *is a staircase going up to* MOLLY LARKIN'S *bedroom—in the roof of* R. *is a door. There is a window behind the bar* L. *There are chairs and tables about, a small old tinkling piano right. Also a small mirror on the wall* R., *beside the piano. It is night. Through the big open doorway a mountain is seen in the distance and a beautiful blue sky full of stars. The stage is dark and the moonlight streams in a streak through the window from* L. *to* R.

DISCOVERED: *After the curtain is raised* MOLLY LARKINS *appears on the stairs from her room above and comes down into the hall, a small lighted oil lamp in her hand. She is dressed for the dance in a bright silk skirt and a bright pink silk waist. Neither is made in an exactly fashionable way; in fact, she has made both herself, copying with indifferent success a picture seen in a city Sunday paper. She is about thirty years old, somewhat plump, and decidedly attractive. She places the lamp on a table and goes to light a lamp hanging on the wall between the foot of the staircase and the big doorway. While she is lighting it* QUICK FOOT JIM *comes slowly and softly in* C. *door from* R., *and, stealing behind her, just as she has finished*

lighting the lamp, takes her in his arms and, bending her head back, kisses her. She is not frightened, being used to him. JIM *looks haggard, careworn and sloven.*

MOLLY. So you're back, Jim. *(Without turning to look at him, she goes on to the next lamp to light it,* L.U.E.*)*

JIM. *(Following her)* Yes.

MOLLY. *(Busy with the lamp)* Why was you away for so long?

JIM. Jim went away to find out if he could forget Molly!

MOLLY. *(Crosses to* R.*)* Well—(JIM *grunts.)*—seeing you're back, I guess you *couldn't* forget me, eh? *(With a coquettish smile at him. She has finished lighting this lamp, No.* 3*, and goes to another, No.* 4. JIM *follows her and speaks when he is beside her again.)*

JIM. Me come back now for good!

MOLLY. Well, you needn't be so cross about it!

JIM. *He* go away next time! (MOLLY *looks up sharply at* JIM *from the lamp bus. for a second, then goes on with the business of lighting.)* He come here every day since Jim gone?

MOLLY. *(Shortly)* Yes.

JIM. He make love?

MOLLY. Well, he ain't exactly prejudiced against the idea!

(JIM *gives an angry grunt and* MOLLY*, with half a laugh, goes to the next lamp.* JIM *follows her.)*

JIM. He come here to-night?

MOLLY. Hum—hum—— *(Goes to lamp* R. *down stage.)*

JIM. You are all dressed fine! Eh! Like the morning sky—for *him.*

MOLLY. No, Miss Weston's giving a party here to-night.

JIM. You dance with him, Jim kill you.

MOLLY. *(Laughs and strikes a match, saying)* Jim!

JIM. Me kill *you*—you understand? *(She has not yet lighted this lamp. She turns, a little frightened now, the flaming match in her hand.* JIM *blows out the match.)* Like that, Jim put out your life!

MOLLY. *(Afraid of him)* Don't do anything crazy, Jim. It wouldn't do you no good to kill *me*. Don't you know yet that I don't love nobody else but *you?* I'm only foolin' Mr. Weston.

JIM. Well, we don't want you to fool him, you see? Jim, he been in the mountains above the birds, high up there with the clouds, and Jim try if Jim could live without Molly, but Jim can't. Molly got to live with Jim—you understand? *(Taking her roughly by the arm.)*

MOLLY. *(Getting arm away)* Look out! I must light this other lamp. *(Beginning to light it.)*

JIM. *(Crosses to* L., *behind her)* Your hair is Jim's lamp! He won't *kill* you, because then he lose you, but Jim kill him if you fool with him some more. Jim *kill* him! (MOLLY *has finished lighting the lamp. She looks at* JIM *with a look in her eyes of fear and hatred.* JIM *takes her with rough affection by the shoulders.)* Jim give Molly a new name. *(He speaks an Indian name and then translates it.)* Rose-kissed-by-the-sun, so be your name now. *(He takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately.)*

(MISS PRISSIMS *heard calling outside.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Molly! (MOLLY *shudders slightly. Call repeated.)* Molly!

MOLLY. There's Lulu Prissims! Go light the lamp outside. *(She gives him a match.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Calls again impatiently)* Molly!

MOLLY. *(Calls)* Yes, Lulu. Jim's coming with a light.

(JIM *goes halfway to the door, looks back at* MOLLY *and grunts—he is suspicious of her.* JIM *exits at back to* R.)

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Heard saying)* Hurry up, hurry up! I can't see my way and I'm afraid of spoiling my dress!

JIM. *(Outside in a conciliatory voice)* All right! All right!

(MOLLY *has stood still watching him with hatred in her face. As she hears him say, "All right," she relaxes and moves with a long, loud sigh. She rearranges her waist and looks about the hall; goes to one of the lamps which is burning too high and turns it down a little. Meanwhile* MISS PRISSIMS *is heard coming up the outside stairs, talking a stream of chatter all the time.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Good evening, Jim. I didn't dare come up without a light. I was afraid I might hurt my dress! I hope I ain't late! I've got on a bran' new body! I thought I'd show them folks they ain't the only girls who can wear stylish duds. My! *(Breathing hard. She enters almost breathless from the stairs. She is a stout blonde, pretty-faced woman, no longer young, but with girlish manners. She carries a roll of music and a newspaper parcel containing white slippers.)* Good evening, Molly. *(To* C.)

MOLLY. Good evening, Lulu! You seem out of breath! Did Jim kiss you?

(MOLLY *crosses to* R. *Re-enter* JIM *quietly. He sits*

in a chair. MOLLY *busies herself moving the chairs and tables from the centre of the room to against the wall.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. No. I wish he had! It's them stairs. *(Taking off her hat.)* My, you've got your new pink body on, ain't you? It looks real sweet. *(Crossing to piano.)*

MOLLY. Yes, I got it when I was to Denver. *(Taking hold of the chair in which* JIM *is sitting.)* Jim, I want to put this chair away. (JIM *slowly rises and sits on the table.* MOLLY, *after putting the chair against the wall, moves the other table.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. I suppose they're awful stylish folks that's coming? *(She sits on the piano stool and begins to unbutton her boots.)*

MOLLY. Well, you know what the Westons are like.

MISS PRISSIMS. I know *him.* I guess all the girls around Silverville knows *him!*

MOLLY. *(At the table at which* JIM *is sitting)* Get up!

JIM. You no let me sit nowhere.

MOLLY. Sit on the piano stool.

JIM. Miss Lulu she sit on the piano stool.

MOLLY. Well, then sit on Miss Lulu! *(Laughing.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Land sakes, Molly! *(She has taken off her shoes.)*

MOLLY. *(Pointing off* R.*)* Go straight through the supper room. The ladies' dressing room is the other side.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(To* JIM*)* Jim, put them in for me. I can't go in my stocking feet. (JIM *takes her shoes and hat and exits slowly* R.*)*

MOLLY: *(Going to her)* What in the world—— *(Interrupted.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Interrupting)* The new boarder

at our house lent me some elegant white satin slippers. *(Unwrapping them.)* Jes' look!

MOLLY. *(Doubtfully)* Do they fit you?

MISS PRISSIMS. Almost—only a teeney mite small, but you know the pedals of the piano won't work, so I really don't use my feet any! *(Getting into first slipper with difficulty, as her voice shows.)*

MOLLY. *(Laughs)* Lulu Prissims, you ninny! *You* ain't *invited* to this party!

MISS PRISSIMS. Ouch! *(As she tries to get on second slipper, finally she manages to do it, but it is evident that they are very tight. She starts playing the "Maiden's Prayer.")* I'm sort of hopin' some young man'll get a mash on me and ask me to dance!

MOLLY. What's that you're playing?

MISS PRISSIMS. Ain't it sweet? My favorite piece—"The Maiden's Prayer."

(Enter B.L. SHERIFF BRENT.)

SHERIFF. Good evening, Miss Larkins.

MOLLY. Good evening, Sheriff. Good gracious! you've come to turn me out, I suppose! (MISS PRISSIMS *turns and sees* SHERIFF.)

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Smirking)* Oh, good evening, Sheriff!

SHERIFF. Good evening.

MISS PRISSIMS. Good evening——

MOLLY. Go on playing, Lulu. I've got business with the Sheriff.

(MISS PRISSIMS *begins to play again, but does her best through the scene to overhear what is going on between* MOLLY *and the* SHERIFF.)

SHERIFF. Sorry, but I'll have to dispossess you. Warned you three times, you know, and you promised

to pay this morning or clear out of your own accord.

MOLLY. I know, but—— *(Interrupted.)*

SHERIFF. There's a party crazy to git the hall—ready to step right in to-night.

MOLLY. Well, he won't, for *I'm* going to pay up *to-night!*

SHERIFF. You've said that before, old girl. *(He crosses to bar—crosses* L.*)*

MOLLY. I've got to dance to-night with the swells from the Wheatley Ranch. They pay before they go, and I'll hand the money right over to you.

SHERIFF. How much'll it cover?

MOLLY. All I owe to you up to Saturday.

SHERIFF. No extry in advance?

MOLLY. *(Quietly going to him)* Oh, well, perhaps I won't want to stay here after Saturday.

SHERIFF. *(Surprised—whistles)* Don't say! Going to leave Silverville?

MOLLY. Never mind—I don't know yet. *(Comes down* C.*)*

SHERIFF. The boys'd miss you, I kin tell yer! *(Noise outside.)*

MOLLY. *(Listening)* Here comes the folks. Say, hang around and come in again in about an hour and I'll pay you then. *(Goes up.)*

SHERIFF. All right. I actually am sorry to press you, but I'm forced to do it by the owners. *(He goes up.)*

MOLLY. You'll get your money when you come back. *(Following him.)*

(The WESTON *party are heard arriving outside and coming up the steps.* MISS PRISSIMS *hears them and stops playing.)*

SHERIFF. *(To* MOLLY*)* Good-bye for the present, Miss.

MISS PRISSIMS. Good-bye, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. Good-bye. Say, Moll, you might overlook a bet and hold me out a drink or two. Will I come back?

MOLLY. Why, of course!

SHERIFF. Bully for you, old girl! *(Exits.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Ain't he handsome! I'll be willing to expire just here if I could feel his arm around my waist as I breathed my last!

MOLLY. *All the way around? (Coming down, pushes her shoulders. Starts bustling off entrance.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Oh, ain't you mean! *(She rises and goes to take a step, but stops in agony from her tight slippers and sits on the stool again as enter* MRS. WESTON, WESTON, MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE—*the two latter young and attractive women. The women are dressed in fashionable ball dresses.* MOLLY *has gone to meet them.)*

MRS. WESTON. Here we are, Miss Larkins!

MISS CARTON. Oh, isn't this perfectly charming?

MISS LARRABEE. Charming! (MISS PRISSIMS *rises as they come.)*

MOLLY. *(Introducing)* Miss Lulu Prissims, the ochestry—Lulu, Mis' Weston and lady friends.

MISS PRISSIMS. (Bowing) Pleased to meet you! My, but you all do look elegant!

MRS. WESTON. That's a *pretty waist you're* wearing.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(R.C.)* Well, I think myself it's real stylish! But land sakes—*(Apropos of* MRS. WESTON'S *decollette)*—ain't you afraid of catching cold? *(Ladies amused.)*

MOLLY. *(R.)* I shouldn't think you'd feel safe, exactly—coming over with all them gems on! There's lots of rough people around here, you know. *(Crosses to door R.)*

MRS. WESTON. Miss Larkins, I don't know what fear is, and I am armed, anyway. *(Showing an*

exquisite little pistol which she carries in a special pocket of her dress. MOLLY *goes up* R.*)*

MOLLY. Lulu, show the ladies to the dressing room. *(Going over to bar. To* MRS. WESTON*)* It's through the supper room on the other side. *(Pointing* R.*, crosses* L. *and goes behind bar.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. This way, please. *(She turns and looks at the jewels on* MRS. WESTON.*)* Oh, my! Them diamonds and pearls! I suppose they're *real! (Exits* R. *She walks very gingerly on account of her slippers, as if on eggs, and it is evident from her walk that she can hardly stand it.* MRS. WESTON *leads the way after her and is followed off by her two friends,* WESTON *being left behind with* MOLLY.*)*

MRS. CARTON. *(At door* R.*)* Oh, isn't it fun? *(Exits.)*

MISS LARRABEE. Isn't it? *(Exits.)*

(MOLLY *removes some bottles on bar.* WESTON *follows her across. As they cross with their backs turned* R.*, they do not see* JIM*, who re-enters* R. *immediately after the women have exited by that door.* JIM *enters softly and slowly, and watching* MOLLY *and* WESTON*, steals to the staircase which goes to* MOLLY'S *room, through the rails.* MOLLY *back of bar.)*

WESTON. *(Leaning across the bar on his folded arms)* Let me help you.

MOLLY. *(Laughing)* Oh, yes, that's the way you men help a woman! It's done! *(Leaning on the bar opposite him.)*

WESTON. I wonder if I could kiss you across the bar?

MOLLY. *(Smiling)* I reckon you could if I was willing. (JIM *goes on steps.)*

WESTON. Aren't you willing?

MOLLY. Good land! Why don't you try and see?

(JIM'S *head rises stealthily above stair rail in his desire to see.* WESTON *leans over* MOLLY, *who leans toward him. They kiss. At the same moment* MRS. WESTON *opens door* R. *and enters. She goes toward them and then draws back quietly. They don't see her.)*

MOLLY. That'll do. They'll be coming in again. *(She leaves the bar and comes outside, close to him. Both keep a lookout on the door* R., *but of course are oblivious of the presence of* JIM, *and so do not look out for him. He watches through the stair rails.)*

WESTON. *(In slightly lowered voice)* Meet me same place to-morrow?

(JIM *steals out door* C.)

MOLLY. Can't say for certain—Jim's back!

WESTON. What of it? Aren't you going to throw him over?

MOLLY. I'm afraid of him.

WESTON. You'd better leave this place. *(A laugh outside* L.)

MOLLY. How do you mean? *(Noise of the others behind door* R.) Sh——

(Re-enter MRS. WESTON, MRS. CARTON, MISS LARRABEE *and* MISS PRISSIMS . *In the bustle of their entrance* JIM *steals down the stairs and out of door back. He isn't noticed. He exits* B.L. *and exits off to* L., *instead of to* R., *where all the others come from and pass to in using the entrance and exit* L.R. JIM *remains on the piazza that runs around the house. He remains on the side, outside* L.)

MRS. CARTON. I love everything about it; it's all so absolutely different!

MISS LARRABEE. Absolutely.

MRS. WESTON. *(Gaily)* It seems to me our other guests are very fashionable.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Delighted)* Oh, we ain't common folks out here, ma'am.

(MOLLY *goes to door* R., *looking off.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(To* WESTON) Weston! A word with you, please. *(They pass aside to* L., *beside the bar.* JIM'S *face is seen watching stealthily into window* L.*)* How dare you carry on with that woman practically in my presence?

WESTON. *(Coolly)* I don't know what you mean.

MRS. WESTON. I came into the room a moment ago when you and she were *here! (By the bar.* WESTON *whistles and, smiling, shrugs his shoulders.)* Do what you like when you are by yourself, but at least respect my presence and that of my friends in this house.

WESTON. Oh, come! Don't make an idiot of yourself!

MRS. WESTON. Oh, you needn't be alarmed. It isn't that I do that in public! *(Noise outside.)*

MOLLY. Here comes some other folks! (JIM *disappears from window. At door)* It's the party from Sunset Hill. *(Speaking to the people outside)* This way, please.

(Enter two ladies and gentlemen—the latter dressed in cowboy clothes. MRS. WESTON *and* WESTON *greet them. They also greet* MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE, *whom they already know.* JOE'S *voice is heard outside in the distance calling.)*

JOE. Hello, there!

MOLLY. Here come the boys!

(WESTON *shows the two ladies to door, where they exit to dressing room. All the men have hung their hats on wall* B.C. MRS. WESTON *and* WESTON *separate,* WESTON *remaining by bar,* MRS. WESTON *crossing to her friends,* R.C.*)*

MRS. CARTON. I'm going to see my *first real cowboy!* I'm so excited!

MISS LARRABEE. Oh, so am I——

MOLLY. *(In the doorway to* JOE *outside)* They're waiting for you.

JOE. *(Bows to* MRS. WESTON) Good evening, ma'am. We was detained on account of the boss's clothes. *(Keeps an awkward distance; stands up stage* C. MOLLY *goes up to barroom and exits there.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Going up to* JOE *and shaking his hand)* Good evening, Joe. How handsome you are looking to-night!

JOE. *(Terribly embarrassed, aside to her)* For Gawd's sake, ma'am!

MRS. WESTON. I want to present you to my friends, Mrs. Carton and Miss Larrabee. *(Both ladies bow graciously.* JOE *bows several times, awkward and embarrassed.)* Mr.—— (MRS. WESTON *wishes to add* JOE'S *name to the introduction, but doesn't know it.)* Mr.—— I don't know your last name, Joe.

JOE. Neither do I, ma'am. Guess Joe'll have to do.

MRS. WESTON. *(Very pleasantly)* Oh, perfectly, I am sure—Joe's such a dear name.

MISS LARRABEE. *(Equally pleased)* A perfect *dear!*

JOE. Dave and Pete's outside. I guess they're afraid to come in. *(Smiling, he goes to the door. The two men guests join* MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE.)

MRS. CARTON. *(To* MISS LARRABEE) He's too handsome for words!

MISS LARRABEE. For words!

JOE. *(Outside in doorway)* Come on in. They won't hurt you! *(Aside to those outside)* Say, they're butes! *(He re-enters.)* They're coming! *(He goes to* MISS PRISSIMS R., *whom he greets and talks with much pleasure to her. Re-enter the two lady guests* R., *who also greet* JOE *and talk to him. Enter* PETE *and* DAVE. *Both men are awkward and repeat.)*

DAVE *and* PETE. Good evening, ma'am.

(MRS. WESTON *shakes hands with them and introduces them to her friends.)*

MRS. WESTON. Mrs. Carton, Miss Larrabee. *(The women shake hands with the men, embarrassing them terribly.)*

(Enter RANSOM *and* MIDGE. RANSOM, *as all men are, is in cowboy clothes.* MIDGE *is dressed in a plain, unfashionable, badly made white frock, high neck and long sleeves, with a large wreath of wild flowers in her hair, which is down.* MRS. WESTON *has moved toward the door to meet them. She greets them with almost especial cordiality.)*

MRS. WESTON. The others I think you know. But where is Mr. Teddy? *(With a gesture toward the other guests.)*

PETE. He's coming. Don't you hear him?

(RANSOM, *after shaking hands, passes on and greets the other ladies whom he knows.* TEDDY *is heard very heavily mounting on the stairs.)*

MIDGE. He has to come up awfully slow for fear of falling.

MRS. WESTON. Dear me, has he hurt himself? What's the joke?

MIDGE. No, but we're afraid he will. *(All laugh.)* He's done what you asked him to.

JOE. Yes, he's got my duds on. *(All laugh.)*

TEDDY. *(In doorway)* Good evening. *(All laugh.)* Well, I've kept my promise. Now I'll go home. *(Goes up* C. *All laugh.)*

MRS. WESTON. Oh, no—no, Mr. North. I want to present you to my friends. Mrs. Carton, Miss Larrabee, this is Mr. North.

TEDDY. *(Bowing)* Delighted, ladies. I'm sorry I can't come nearer, but my friend Joe's feet are in the way. Won't you be so kind as to walk over them and join me on the other side? *(Holding his big hat on his chest.)*

MRS. CARTON. *(Laughing)* You know, this is our first visit west.

TEDDY. I hope it won't be the last.

MRS. CARTON. Oh, no, we are so delighted with everything.

TEDDY. *(Going back to* MRS. WESTON) We think it's rather nice out here ourselves, don't we? *(Going to* MRS. WESTON.)

MRS. WESTON. *(To* TEDDY) Yes, you mustn't chase me around everywhere to-night—you must devote yourself to my friends!

(TEDDY *simply stands still and looks reproachfully at* MRS. WESTON. MISS LARRABEE *and* MRS. CARTON *turn to talk to* DAVE *and* PETE.)

MISS PRISSIMS. Shall I play now?

MRS. WESTON. Are you ready for dancing Mr. Teddy?

TEDDY. Oh, perfectly! *(All laugh.)* I have on

clothes a trifle small underneath these and I'm only waiting for a good fairy to say "Presto!" to shed.

MIDGE. *(In her high voice)* Speaking of clothes, ain't *my* dress awfully pretty?

JOE. I was thinking, Midge, as it weren't your regular get-up, sort of angel-like.

MIDGE. *(With a curtsey)* This is the first week's receipts of the swear-box!

TEDDY. Yes! I paid for the *shirt waist* and one sleeve. The rest of the boys shared in the other sleeve—— *(All laugh.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Impatient at the piano)* Ain't you going to dance?

MRS. WESTON. Yes, now, *Miss* Prissims.

TEDDY. Am I to dance?

MRS. WESTON. Of course!

TEDDY. Without changing?

MRS. WESTON. Yes.

TEDDY. Give my love to mother—I can see my finish.

MRS. CARTON. *(Coming down)* Jess, I won't dance a step unless you take that pistol out of your pocket.

MISS LARRABEE. Nor I.

MRS. WESTON. Very well. We've plenty of men to protect us now. *(Crosses to* TEDDY—*gives pistol to* TEDDY.) Will you take care of that for me? The girls are mortally afraid of it in my hands.

MRS. CARTON. No, *in your pocket!*

TEDDY. It is a beauty! *(Going away with it.)*

MRS. WESTON. Joe gave it to me! *(Crosses to* MIDGE.*)*

MIDGE *and* TEDDY. *(At the same time, jealously) Did* he?

MRS. WESTON. *(To* MIDGE) It was only a *bet* he lost. Don't *you* trouble!

(TEDDY *places the pistol on the bar.* JIM'S *face is seen at the window, watching.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(To* MISS PERKINS) A waltz, Miss Prissims.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Slipper bus.)* Just a minute.

MRS. WESTON. A waltz, Miss Prissims.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(After slipper bus. Calls)* Gents will please choose lady friends for the next waltz! *(Plays chord on the piano.)*

(There is a rush on the part of JOE, PETE, DAVE *and* RANSOM *for* MIDGE, RANSOM *bowing politely to* MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE *as he leaves them hurriedly and saying, "Excuse me." All four men meet before* MIDGE *and bow, speaking at once—)*

JOE. Come on, Midge!
PETE. Will you give it to me?
DAVE. Give me a chance, Midge!
(All at the same time.)

(MIDGE *laughs merrily, so do* MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE, *who take their desertion very good-naturedly.* MISS PRISSIMS *manages to get her tight white slippers off and puts them side by side beside the piano. She is evidently very much more comfortable and sighs with relief.)*

WESTON. I'm sorry for you all, but Midge has promised *me* her first dance.

(TEDDY *and* MRS. WESTON *look up, surprised and not pleased, and then look at each other questionably.)*

MRS. CARTON. *(To the men)* Excuse me for not mentioning it, but—*there are others. (Goes up.)*

PETE. I beg pardon, ma'am.

(PETE *and* DAVE *go up bashfully to the two ladies* R. PETE *asks* MRS. CARTON *to dance.* DAVE *takes* MISS LARRABEE. JOE *watches* MIDGE *and* WESTON. WESTON *has offered his arm and* MIDGE *takes it. They walk slowly to* L. *Two other couples change partners.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Aside—earnestly to* TEDDY) I hope that beast of a husband of mine isn't going to flirt with Midge. *(*L.*)*

TEDDY. You can trust little Midge.

MRS. WESTON. But you can't my husband. Take her away from him. He's not fit—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* I believe you're jealous.

MRS. WESTON. Jealous? *(Laughs heartily.)* Come! You're going to ask me to dance? Or must I go to Melancholy Joe there?

TEDDY. Only over my dead body! *(Bows elaborately and they get ready to dance.)*

(Chord, "Monte Carlo." MISS PRISSIMS *starts off, playing in impossible time. Each couple tries to dance, but comes to grief at once.)*

PETE. What is this here dance, anyway?

TEDDY. *(By the piano and looking at the music from which* MISS PRISSIMS *is playing)* Say, this ain't a waltz!

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Surprised)* Ain't it?

TEDDY. No. *(Pointing to the music.)* It's a quadrille. *(All laugh.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Well, this is all right! *(She begins to play "The Beautiful Blue Danube," flatting*

all the upper notes. They start to dance, but all get laughing at the music and stop.)

TEDDY. Say, let's try that quadrille again! (MISS PRISSIMS *stops playing.)*

MRS. WESTON. All right! *(To all)* Come along, Mr. Teddy. You must call the figures!

TEDDY. All right.

(Chord first. The quadrille is now ready. Piano B. flat. "Georgia Camp Meeting" music. TEDDY *and* MRS. WESTON, WESTON *and* MIDGE, MRS. CARTON *and* PETE, MISS LARRABEE *and* DAVE. *The rest sit at the back and watch.)*

TEDDY. *(Calls)* Salute partners!

(All bow, the two cowboys very awkwardly, TEDDY *with great gusto, and almost losing his balance again, saying as he recovers, "Ouch!" The quadrille played should be one of the popular airs, and all must sing these airs as they dance,* TEDDY *shouting his orders above their voices.)*

TEDDY. First four forward and back! Cross over! Fool around a minute!

(TEDDY *does a few fancy steps, getting his boot loose and partly off. As* TEDDY *and* MRS. WESTON *return, she speaks.)*

MRS. WESTON. But this is the *lancers!*

TEDDY. Is it? *(Stumbles.)* Oh, well, everything goes! Cunoodle corners! One—two—three—go!

(All business with the corners, turn and then turn each his own partner. TEDDY *turns his corner all right, but on coming back, and turning* MRS. WESTON, *he trips and falls on his knees on the*

floor, clinging with both arms around her waist.)

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Loudly)* Sides! *(B. flat—"I Want My Lulu.")*

TEDDY. Got it! Forward and back!

(Business of dance. MIDGE, *who is next to* TEDDY, *is ignorant of dance, and* TEDDY, *with a bow of apology to* MRS. WETSON, *goes close beside* MIDGE *and tells her what to do during her dancing, going with her once or twice, all to* WESTON'S *annoyance.)*

MIDGE. Oh, my! I ain't no idea! (TEDDY *shows her as above.)*

TEDDY. Cross over! Song and dance! Come back! *(Bus.)* Shasshay, all! Go it, corners! *(Bus. When* TEDDY *comes back this time to turn* MRS. WESTON *he does so with marked care, and an air of mock triumph as he succeeds in getting her around without falling.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. All over again!

("Hot Time in the Old Town"—two chords.)

TEDDY. Not on your life! Give us the next tune! *(She does so. All bow.)* It's good exercise! *(All bow elaborately.)* Forward and back! Ladies' chain!

(Enter suddenly at back DICK ROD—*stands in the doorway. He is dressed in a fine white shirt, black frock coat and black soft hat, narrow black tie.)*

DICK. Hello! Hello, there! *(All look up—a moment's silence.)*

JOE. Hello, Dick Rod.

ALL. Dick Rod! *(The men's right hands involuntarily go to their pistol pockets, but they try to cover the movement and look nonchalant.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Aside to* TEDDY) Who is he?

TEDDY. He's never been known to miss his man.

(DICK *has started to stroll in.)*

JOE. Beg pardon, but this is private!

DICK. Oh, private, is it? Well, suppose I made it more private by spotting out every blamed lamp? *(Brings out his pistol. The women all move in alarm. The men keep their hands on their pistol pockets, but do not bring out the weapons.)*

TEDDY. Hold on! Say! I don't think the *gentleman* quite understands. The hall has been hired this evening by a lady.

MRS. WESTON. *(Coming forward)* Won't you present your friend, Mr. Teddy?

TEDDY. Mr. Dick Rod, Mrs. Weston. *(With a gesture of introduction.)* Mrs. Weston, Mr. Rod.

DICK. *(Bowing low with great elegance)* Ma'am.

MRS. WESTON. I am delighted to meet you. *(She offers to shake hands, so that* DICK *is obliged to transfer his pistol to his left hand.)*

TEDDY. Mrs. Weston is giving a party to a few personal friends. You see the *bar* is closed.

DICK. Is it? Well, if the lady would like it otherwise, I'll guarantee to open it in one shot! *(All women shocked.)*

MRS. WESTON. Oh, no, don't trouble! Won't you join us in a dance?

DICK. No, thank ye, but I'll promise to keep any blamed gent dancing as long as you like, unless he wants a couple of balls in his feet!

TEDDY. Say, I think we'll be satisfied with just plain dancing without fancy lead trimmings!

DICK. Anything to please the ladies—especially

you, ma'am. *(Bowing to* MRS. WESTON.) You ain't a widder by any chance?

MRS. WESTON. No.

DICK. *(Elaborately)* Sorry!

TEDDY. *(Showing the way out, plainly)* Good night. *(Goes back of* MRS. WESTON.)

DICK. *(Turns on* TEDDY, *with a movement of his hand toward his pistol pocket. Similar movement on the part of all the men.)* Oh, I ain't in such a hurry, and it seems a pity not to have just *one set* of pigeon-wings out of *you,* anyway!

TEDDY. Yes, it does seem a pity!

DICK. A little hot lead around your toes every three seconds would keep you stepping pretty lively, eh? *(Crosses* R.)

TEDDY. Oh, very lively—a sort of continuous performance!

(DICK *makes a sweeping glance about the room. Each man's hand on his pitsol tightens.* DICK *laughs—he turns to* MRS. WESTON.)

DICK. There ain't a gent here good enough for you—— *(Bows again very low to* MRS. WESTON *and starts to exit. The men's hands leave their pistols. Stopping, he turns halfway toward the door and men's hands go quickly back to their pistols.) Not one! (With a look around, taking in each one of the men, turns again to go out. The men's hands come partly away again from their pistols, but at the doorway he turns about, and back go the men's hands quickly.) Not one! (Bows—exits. Great relief among the company.)*

TEDDY. Pleasant neighbor to have drop in occasionally!

MRS. WESTON. Very! Shall we finish the dance? *(There is a murmur of all the others talking together.)*

COWBOY AND THE LADY

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TEDDY. Say no! You must let me change my togs.

MRS. WESTON. Oh, very well, then. Come into the supper room, girls, for a minute. Mr. Teddy wants to dazzle us. Now come as soon as you are ready. *(Exits* R.*)*

TEDDY. Now—presto change!

(MISS PRISSIMS *has slowly got into her slippers during the scene with* DICK ROD. *She drives the women before her into room* R., *turns at door and speaks across stage to* TEDDY. *She exits quickly* R.*)*

DAVE. *(To* JOE, PETE, RANSOM *and* WESTON*)* Say, will you-uns go outside for a spell. I want to remark something private to the boss. *(They all make a movement except* PETE.*)*

PETE. On condition you join outside and let me gab with the boss when you're through.

DAVE. Agreed!

(JOE, PETE, WESTON *and* RANSOM *exit back and are seen outside there on the porch.)*

TEDDY. Perhaps you don't think it's warm in these clothes. I feel like twins!

DAVE. Boss!

TEDDY. Well?

DAVE. It's the little one, Midge!

TEDDY. What about her?

DAVE. I want to hitch on to her!

TEDDY. *(Drops boots)* Say! Wake up! You've only known her three weeks.

DAVE. I only want you to put in a good word and fix the whole thing up for me.

TEDDY. Oh! Is that all?

DAVE. Oh, I ain't a bad lot. Tell her I don't get

drunk and I never struck no woman. I allow I can hol' my own over any honest poker hands in these yere parts. I kin work, and I'm honest, and—and—I'd give the biggest mine in Colorado if I had it if she'll keep company with me.

TEDDY. Dave, those are my sentiments exactly—in regard to someone else. But why don't you tell Midge all this yourself?

DAVE. Sort of can't get the grit. Calculated as how mebbe you'd try to pump her a little and find which way the land lays.

(The women off R. *rattle the door and* MRS. WESTON *calls.)*

MRS. WESTON. Hurry! Hurry!

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Outside with her mouth full)* We're eating up all the supper!

TEDDY. *(Calls back to them)* All right. In a minute. *(To* DAVE) All right, Dave, if you'll help me out with the other transport!

DAVE. Thank you, boss!

TEDDY. That's all right, Dave, but I can't encourage you. I've a strong reason to believe she's leaning in another direction.

DAVE. Maybe she'll change her mind when you tell her I want her to——

PETE. *(Looking in door* B.L.*)* Dave! Ain't you-uns nearly finished?

DAVE. Yes. *(Leaving* TEDDY.) I'm quit!

TEDDY. *(Calls to* PETE) Come on! Next! *(Bus. pulling off shirt.)*

PETE. Boss!

TEDDY. Go on. I'll be out in a minute.

PETE. Boss, I ain't been with this gang long, and I don't know as you're on to me—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* Only on to good points. Help me off with this polar bear——

PETE. Well, say, Boss—I'm what you call in love!

TEDDY. You don't say so! *(Bus. of moving glass down bar.* PETE *follows it.)* So am I.

PETE. I've got it bad!

TEDDY. So've I—awful!

PETE. I ain't slep' much for three nights.

TEDDY. I can beat you—me three weeks!

PETE. I'm in earnest, Boss.

TEDDY. Earnest isn't in it with *me,* Peter!

PETE. I deemed *you* might speak to her for me.

TEDDY. By George, this is my busy evening! Who is it, Miss Prissims?

PETE. That ivory-thumper? Boss, it's Midge.

TEDDY. Midge?

PETE. Well, what do you think, Boss?

TEDDY. Think you're crazy.

JOE. *(Head in the doorway)* Push ahead! Push ahead!

PETE. *(To* JOE) Get out! *(To* TEDDY) She might do worse!

MRS. WESTON. *(Off* R.) Isn't your Dudeship ready yet?

TEDDY. In a minute. I'm playing mother to a couple of boys just now——

MRS. WESTON. Your prinking. I shall expect to see something beautiful.

TEDDY. A dream!

PETE. Go on, Boss; work it for me, Boss! Tell her I can't eat!

TEDDY. She knows better! (TEDDY *laughs.)*

(Loud knocking on the door R. *by the ladies and re-enter* JOE L.)

JOE. Come, Pete. They're all getting restless, and I want a whack at the boss myself.

PETE. *(Going to the door)* All right. *(Going off* C.) Well, I can't eat much!

TEDDY. Well, Joe?

JOE. Boss, I've got a load on my mind.

TEDDY. Well, here, increase your load. *(Handing him an immense glass of whiskey.)*

JOE. You see, it's Midge——

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* I know you love her. Don't talk, drink!

JOE. How in hell—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. There's a regular epidemic of Midge tonight! *Bury that.*

JOE. But look here, Boss. I want to tell you— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* I know you can't eat. Don't *talk—drink!*

JOE. Of course, I ain't—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. You ain't worthy of her. I never knew a decent man in love that was. Don't talk, drink.

JOE. But that ain't all!

TEDDY. No, I know it. You can't sleep—and you want me to ask her to marry you.

JOE. Not by a darn sight! I'll *do* the asking!

(TEDDY *comes* C. *from behind the bar.)*

TEDDY. No! Bully for you! *(Shaking his hand —crosses to* R.*)*

JOE. Only I want you hanging around when I plums the question to sorter support me.

TEDDY. Support! What are you going to do—faint?

JOE. Awh! You know what I mean—gimme courage.

TEDDY. Give you courage? Well, get it over tonight, or Dave'll get it ahead of you! *(Crosses* R.*)*

JOE. *(Astonished)* Dave! I'll break his head if he dast!

TEDDY. Well, while you're breaking Dave's head, Pete'll be walking off with the prize.

JOE. *(Astonished)* Pete! Look here, Boss. I was willing to stand by and give Mister Billy a show becuz he was a gent and could make a lady of her, but if you think I am going to stand by for two ornery hulks what ain't no darn bit more good enough for her'n I be—— *(Interrupted.)*

(Terrific beating on the door R. *where the women are. At the same time* DAVE, PETE, RANSOM *and* WESTON *appear in doorway* R.N. *and shout with one voice, "Time!" The men enter.)*

TEDDY. Come on, now. Line up over there. *(Leading way to door* R.*)*

WESTON. Each of us choose one, as she comes into the room, for a walk outside.

(The men make a double line, TEDDY *next door.* WESTON, RANSOM *and* JOE *facing the audience on the other side of door, with backs to the door.* PETE, DAVE *and the other men guests.)*

TEDDY. No, I have a better idea. Let's all cakewalk out into the moonlight. *(Each chooses his partner as she passes him. He knocks on door.)* Come on, ladies; we don't want any supper yet. Let's all cakewalk out in the moonlight——

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing from the other side of door)* All right!

(Ladies enter. First MIDGE, *who is taken by* WESTON; *then the other ladies in turn*—MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE, *her hand to* TEDDY—JOE *exits. After her boys* DAVE *and* PETE. MRS. WESTON *and* TEDDY *cakewalk alone and stop. If* RANSOM *is in this scene he and* JOE *exit together, but doing walk very badly, clap hands and keep up the fun by laughing until exit.)*

MRS. WESTON. You can rest now, Miss Prissims. *(On one side of piano,* TEDDY *on the other.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Sighs)* I'm jes' dying fur a little teenty, tiny turn myself.

TEDDY. *(Quietly to* MRS. WESTON) Come on and see the stars? It's a dandy night.

MRS. WESTON. *(Mischievously ignoring* TEDDY'S *remark, speaking to* MISS PRISSIMS) I'm sure Mr. Teddy would be delighted to give you a turn.

TEDDY. Oh, delighted! But there's no one to play. *(To* MRS. WESTON) Come on!

MISS PRISSIMS. We might hum a tune while we danced. Can he hum?

MRS. WESTON. I'm sure he's a *hummer!*

TEDDY. No—always made other things *hum.*

MRS. WESTON. I can play a little—though of course I'm not an artist like Miss Prissims. (TEDDY *is glaring and making all sorts of signs at* MRS. WESTON.)

MISS PRISSIMS. Oh, that'll be elegant! *(Beginning to edge with her feet after her slippers, which she has again taken off, to get them so she can put them on without being observed.)*

TEDDY. All right. When we come back we'll have a go at it. *(Making a start away.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Following him, in amused aside to him)* No, you mightn't ever come back.

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) Not on your life! What have I ever done to you? I wouldn't dance with that tub. *(Moving another step.* MISS PRISSIMS *is getting into her slippers.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Following him)* Yes, you *will*—to please me!

TEDDY. *(Seriously, pathetically)* Why does it always please you to have me make a guy of myself?

MRS. WESTON. *(Smiling)* I don't know, but it does. Besides, think what a joy it will be for this

poor creature to dance once with *you*. It will last her a year!

TEDDY. It will last my life! *(Starts to go* L.*)*

MRS. WESTON. I'll take a walk with you afterwards—out there in the moonlight.

TEDDY. Will you?

MRS. WESTON. Yes!

TEDDY. Honest?

MRS. WESTON. *(Still smiling)* As Midge says, "Cross my heart"!

TEDDY. You haven't got any to cross! *Mine's* the only heart *you* cross, but I'll treat you.

(MRS. WESTON *stands to one side to let him pass to* MISS PRISSIMS, *who now has her slipper on and has been watching them surreptitiously from the corner of her eye, half turned toward him at the piano. She sees the movement of* MRS. WESTON *and the movement of* TEDDY *toward her, and quickly swings back, facing the piano, assuming an air of modest expectation.* TEDDY *makes a movement to go to her, takes a step or two, and weakens, shakes his head and turns around to look at* MRS. WESTON *as if to say, "It's too much. I can't do it."* MRS. WESTON *stands straight and unrelenting, and after a look of comic, piteous appeal to her,* TEDDY *shrugs his shoulders and buckles up to the task. He makes a bee-line for* MISS PRISSIMS. MISS PRISSIMS *turns quickly and rises, almost taking* TEDDY'S *breath away, and before he can ask her, she speaks.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Delighted)* I'm ready! *(She crosses to* L.*)*

TEDDY. Are you? *(Almost knocked over.)* Yes, so I see! *(With a long, loud sigh.)* I wish I was!

(MRS. WESTON *is with difficulty controlling her laughter—she goes to piano.)*

MRS. WESTON. What is it to be? *(Sits on the piano stool.)*

TEDDY. Life or death!

MRS. WESTON. No, no! Which do you choose?

TEDDY. *Death!*

MRS. WESTON. *(Laughing a little in spite of herself)* Stop joking! What is it to be?

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Laughing at* TEDDY'S *joke)* Oh, I think a waltz is nicest. You get so *separated* in a polka. Don't you think?

TEDDY. No, I don't think!

MRS. WESTON. Come, now, it's a waltz.

(MISS PRISSIMS *holds her arm open ready to embrace* TEDDY *in the dance, and* TEDDY *goes to her with his open, ready to dance. Just as he reaches her he suddenly turns around and goes back quickly to* MRS. WESTON, *to* MISS PRISSIMS'S *evident disappointment, and a necessary accompanying change in her position.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Speaks across to* MRS. WESTON) Oh, dear, ain't he—*(Begins to play.)*—bashful?

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) You'll keep your promise? (MRS. WESTON *nods her head violently as she plays without turning to look at* TEDDY. *He turns abruptly to* MISS PRISSIMS *and speaks peremptorily and half angrily)* Come on! *(He grabs her almost roughly.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Delighted)* Oh! Ain't you strong!

TEDDY. *(With* MISS PRISSIMS *in his arms, standing still, to* MRS. WESTON, *over* MISS PRISSIMS'S *shoulder) A good long walk!* Not a chase off the stoop and back!

MRS. WESTON. *(Playing)* Yes, yes.

(They start to dance. MISS PRISSMS *stops him and speaks archly.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. Now don't you *tickle me,* will you?

TEDDY. I'm not going to tickle you! Hurry up! *(They start to dance again. After a few false starts they get off, but out of step, etc. They stop and try over once again.* MRS. WESTON *is watching them over her shoulder and laughing so she can hardly play.* TEDDY, *who has been very mournful, has to laugh himself as they fail a second time. Meanwhile* MISS PRISSIMS'S *slippers have begun to hurt her very badly.)* Say, excuse me, but I think I could dance better with you if I had kept on Joe's boots! (MRS. WESTON *can no longer restrain her laughing and runs, laughing hysterically, from the room off* R.*)* Where are you going?

MRS. WESTON. I'll be back in a moment.

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Offended)* What's the matter?

TEDDY. I don't know—maybe she's a little *jealous.*

MISS PRISSIMS. Of *me?* Oh, go away! Ain't you a flirt! *(He goes to door* R., *which* MRS. WESTON *has left open, and beckons strongly for her to come back.)* Perhaps you don't know that since I've been in Silverville two men have shot themselves for love of me.

TEDDY. Before—or after? *(He looks off again and beckons.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. I don't know what you mean.

(Re-enter MRS. WESTON, *calming herself evidently with an effort.)*

MRS. WESTON. Excuse me!

(MISS PRISSIMS *goes up* C.)

TEDDY. I thought perhaps you'd gone to get me a drink?

MRS. WESTON. *I'll go and make you a cocktail.*

TEDDY. *(Quickly)* No, no!

(MIDGE *heard calling off* L.)

MIDGE. Brother Teddy! Brother Teddy! *(She enters running,* L., *followed by* WESTON *more slowly. This entrance surprises those on the stage.)* Brother Teddy! *(Goes to him, taking his arm.)*

TEDDY. What's the matter?

MIDGE. Don't leave me alone with him! He held me in his arms for all I could do!

MRS. WESTON. *(Crosses to* WESTON) You beast!

(WESTON *crosses to* L. *in front of bar.)*

MIDGE. There's never no cowboy—no, nor half-breed—on or near Silverville as hes said to me such things as him, nor done as he tried!

TEDDY. *(In a rage at the latter part of her speech, goes threateningly up to* WESTON—*takes him by the throat.)* I'll kill you for insulting this girl!

MIDGE. *(Cries out)* Brother Teddy!

MRS. WESTON. *(With her hand on* TEDDY'S *arm)* Leave him alone, he isn't fit for you to touch!

(TEDDY *very slowly lets go his hold on* WESTON *and as slowly turning, looks amazed at* MRS. WESTON—*surprised at the tone of her voice, which he has never heard before addressed to him. He looks at her tenderly, gratefully, questionably—a short pause.)*

WESTON. *(Recovering himself)* Come on! I'll fight you out in the open!

MIDGE. *No!*

(MRS. WESTON *also makes a movement toward* TEDDY *and shakes her head.)*

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) No, don't ask me not to! *(To* WESTON) I'm ready!

MIDGE. *(Appealing to* MRS. WESTON *and clinging tighter to* TEDDY'S *arm)* Mrs. Weston!

MRS. WESTON. Not now! Please, for Midge and for *my* sake! Some other time when you are calmer, punish him, if you like, later—to-night, if you wish—*(A moment's pause.)*

TEDDY. Very well—for *your* sake—and Midge's. But I am not through with you yet!

MRS. WESTON. Thank you. Won't you take Midge to the others, and come back for—me? *(He bows. To* PRISSIMS) Won't you go into the dressing room? I want to ask you not to mention this to the others.

TEDDY. *(To* WESTON) You—well, I'll tell you what I think of you later! Come, Midge!

(WESTON *laughs and goes* R. *to* MIDGE—TEDDY *starts to exit at* R. *with* MIDGE. *She stops him.)*

MIDGE. Wait a minute! *(She goes quickly to* MRS. WESTON *and takes her a little aside and whispers)* It was him who saved your life that day by the Niagara Canon!

MRS. WESTON. *(In great surprise)* Master Teddy!

MIDGE. Alone, by himself, he done it. *(She goes quickly to* TEDDY *and they exit at* R.N.)

MRS. WESTON. *(Aside)* What a cruel fool I've been! *(To* WESTON) Now I want you to listen to what I have to say and understand it, for I mean it!

(When she is left alone with WESTON, MRS. WESTON *recovers.)* This ends even our fictitious life together. From to-night on I do *not know you! (He laughs.)* Do you understand? You go *your* way—Heaven help you where it leads you to—and I go mine! *(He lights a cigarette.)*

WESTON. Don't be foolish. *(Throws cigarette away.)* This isn't our first quarrel.

MRS. WESTON. More shame to us! It *is* the *last.*

WESTON. I'm not sure I can't force you by the law to live with me so long as we remain man and wife.

MRS. WESTON. I don't *believe* that *is* the *law.*

WESTON. If it isn't, I shall call on your church to help me! I don't intend to let you go your own way.

MRS. WESTON. You can't prevent me! Ever since I married you, you've heaped sorrow and disgrace upon me. Your name which you gave me to bear has been the by-word for scandal in every city we have lived in. I came to you an innocent girl, and you soon made me into a hard and bitter woman, knowing more than any woman should ever know! *(She turns.)* All this is in the past, and though your *shadow* must fall over my future, I've made up my mind it shall be *only your shadow* that darkens it, and not *yourself.*

WESTON. Very well! We'll see!

MRS. WESTON. We will! George, I'm desperate! God forgive me, but I *hate* you!

WESTON. Hate is next door to love. *(Goes close to her.)*

MRS. WESTON. Be careful! *(Crosses* L.*)*

WESTON. Jess, I'll make you forgive and forget. *(Close to her.)* You understand these other women are only past-times, while you I respect and—love—*(Interrupted.)*

MRS. WESTON. Don't! *(Pushing him with her*

two hands by force with an evident strong effort.) I shall go mad if you come so close to me! I'm afraid! I feel to-night I could kill you!

(During this last speech of MRS. WESTON'S TEDDY *has entered and overhears her last words. He starts, amazed and frightened, at her threat.)*

TEDDY. *(R.)* Mrs. Weston! What are you saying?

MRS. WESTON. *(L.) I meant it—I meant it!*

(A moment's pause, in which the three stand looking at each other. TEDDY *comes down* R.)

WESTON. *(C.)* This is not your affair, North!

TEDDY. Mrs. Wetson asked me to come back to her. You heard her. (R. WESTON *goes up* C. *to door.)*

(MRS. WESTON *sinks with elbow on bar* L., *her back toward* TEDDY. TEDDY *stands behind her, at a distance, looking at her with great sympathy, desiring to say something to comfort her—not knowing what to say.)*

TEDDY. *(Hesitatingly, anxiously)* Mrs. Weston? *(No answer.)* Mrs. Weston, can't I help you? *(Distrustfully)* As you wish! *(He starts to go.)*

MRS. WESTON. In five minutes I shall be ready.

TEDDY. In five minutes I shall be back. *(Exit at back.)*

WESTON. *(Laughs)* Jess, see here!

MRS. WESTON. *(At door* R., *to* WESTON) You are not to follow me. *(She exits* R., *slamming door in his face.)*

(WESTON *stands still for a moment, then goes softly*

up the stairs to MOLLY'S *room, taps softly, opens door and speaks. At the same time* JIM'S *face appears at the window* L., *watching.)*

WESTON. Put on your hat and coat. Come down. I want you!

MOLLY. Just see what I'm doing. Come in and help me.

WESTON. Make haste!

(READY for Lights Out.)

(WESTON *enters, leaving door half open—the light in the room shows through the open door.)*

(LIGHTS Out.)

(JIM *enters stealthily and quickly from back. He first goes to the bar and takes* MRS. WESTON'S *pistol which lies there; next he goes to each lamp quickly and puts it out, till finally the room is left in darkness, save the moonlight which streams in through the open window and the light from* MOLLY'S *room. The murmur of* MOLLY'S *and* WESTON'S *voices is heard.)*

WESTON. I'm going to leave this place for good to-night!

MOLLY. Alone?

WESTON. Not if you'll go with me. *(Opening the door wide, leans against its side, facing inside the room so that he doesn't yet notice the darkness of the hall.)* Didn't you hear the quarrel I just had now with my wife?

MOLLY. *(Inside the room)* No, you can't hear nothing in this place—the partitions between the rooms are regular logs, you know.

(When WESTON *appears* JIM *is extreme* R., *where he has just put out the last lamp. As the two*

speak he quickly and stealthily steals across to beside and behind the staircase.)

WESTON. Hurry up! *(He turns and finds the hall dark.)* Hello, who's put the lights out? *(Calls)* Hello, down there! *(A pause for a reply. There is a moment's complete silence, then* MOLLY *speaks.)*

MOLLY. What's the matter? *(Joins* WESTON—*a little frightened.)* Who put the lights out?

WESTON. That's what I want to know.

MOLLY. *(Very frightened—seizes* WESTON) George!

WESTON. What's the matter? You aren't afraid of the dark, are you? *(Trying to lead her down the steps—she pulls him back.)*

MOLLY. No, it's Jim I'm afraid of! He was here to-night. *(Stopping halfway down the stairs.)*

WESTON. Well, what did he want?

MOLLY. *(In half a whisper)* If you hadn't suggested our getting out together to-night I was going to tell you we'd have to go or give each other up. Jim is on to us.

WESTON. What of it? I'm not afraid of the half-breed!

MOLLY. But *I am,* awful afraid! And I'm afraid it's him turned out the lights. To do us both harm.

WESTON. Come on, then, quick. *(Leads her down.)* I'm here to protect you.

MOLLY. I know Jim! He's suspicious of you, and he'd rather see me dead than lost to him. He'd kill us both as soon as eat! *(They have reached the bottom of the steps and have taken a few steps into the room, and are now in the bright streak of moonlight.* JIM *has come behind them during these two steps.)*

JIM. *(Close behind them, in a strong, low, terrible voice)* Sooner!

(MOLLY *gives a loud, awful gasp of horror and, turning quickly, runs for her life up the staircase, stumbling once in reaching her room, and is heard bolting herself in.* WESTON *has started back in surprise at* JIM'S *voice.)*

WESTON. You damned scoundrel!

(JIM *grunts and the two men grapple. They silently struggle a moment in and out of the light, and then* JIM *gets his right arm free.* MRS. WESTON'S *pistol is in his hand and flashes in the light, and at the same moment, in the distance outside,* TEDDY *is heard whistling, "I love a lovely girl, I do," etc. There is a sharp report.* WESTON *staggers.* JIM *catches him just before he falls and lets him down softly.)*

WESTON. *(Dying)* You Indian dog! I'm done for! Jess! Jess! Jess! Forgive me! Forgive! *(He dies, lying on the floor in the streak of moonlight.)*

(JIM *stands over him a moment and grunts. The whistling is heard a little louder.* JIM *throws his head quickly, listening a second, then he hurriedly but without sound gets to the staircase and up it to* MOLLY'S *room. He tries to open the door—it is bolted.)*

JIM. *(In a threatening whisper)* Lemme in! *(He waits a second, but there is no response. He shakes the door—not too loudly.)* Lemme in! D'you hear? *(Again he waits a second.)* What you 'fraid of? Jim won't hurt you! Him's all I want to get rid of so Jim can have you for himself, for always! *(He waits again—a little louder and frightened)* Lemme in, I say, or they'll catch me! If you no

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open the door, I'll break him down and kill you and me both before they can catch me! Jim mean it!

MOLLY. *(In a hoarse whisper on the other side of the door)* You promise you won't hurt me?

JIM. Yass—quick! *(The bolt is drawn. He opens the door, slinks in and bolts it behind him.)*

(The whistling stops. TEDDY *is heard outside coming up the steps.)*

TEDDY. *(Outside)* The five minutes are up! *(He comes into the door, but is stopped short finding the hall in darkness. At the very same moment he enters, but after his speech outside, which she doesn't hear,* MRS. WESTON *enters from* R. *and also stops in the doorway on account of the darkness. Both give vent to an exclamation at once—i.e., at the same time —so that neither hears the other. In surprise)* Hello!

MRS. WESTON. *(In surprise)* Dear me! *(A moment's pause as they gaze into the dark room. Each one sees something on the floor in the moonlight, and both start. Then, unconscious of each other's presence, they come slowly and softly forward, feeling their way as if it were in the dark, with an awful suspicion and dread, as it were, on their faces.* WESTON *lies obliquely, with his head toward the upper* R. *corner of the stage, the moonlight on him.* TEDDY *approaches him from* L.B. MRS. WESTON *approaches him from* R., *the eyes of both are fixed on the body when they reach it—the body between them, he above it, she below, both now in the moonlight themselves. Then they recognize it and each start back with a cry of horror.)*

TEDDY. Good God!

MRS. WESTON. Weston! *(They hear each other's voices and after starting back, they lift their heads, and standing in the streak of moonlight, they look*

into each other's faces across WESTON'S *body. There is an awful moment of recognition, followed by a long pause, and each gazes first amazed, then horrified at the other, each one believing the other to be the murderer. This pause must be held as long as possible, as if they were beyond belief, but still without doubt, as she had apparently found him "red-handed.")* You?

TEDDY. *(With all the same emotions)* Mrs. Weston? *(Another pause, but much shorter, broken by* MIDGE'S *voice outside.)*

MIDGE. *(Outside)* Brother Teddy! Here's the Sheriff! Can't we ask him in to supper—— *(As she is speaking she appears in the doorway and finds all darkness.)* Hello, what's the matter?

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON*—puts his finger on his lips, whispers)* Sh! Trust to me!

(All the others enter after MIDGE—JOE, PETE, DAVE, RANSOM, MRS. CARTON, MISS LARRABEE, *and* MISS PRISSIMS.)

ALL. *(In a confused number of voices)* What is it? What's the matter? etc., etc.

(MUSIC stops.)

SHERIFF. It's all dark! (JOE *lights a match.)*

JOE. Anybody here? *(Coming quickly down.)*

TEDDY. Yes.

MIDGE. That's a comfort. *(She has come forward toward the streak of moonlight, and starts back, horrified.)* Oh! *(All with her see and start back, too, with fright and horror. Exclamations of the company.)*

JOE. Good Gawd!
RANSOM. Good Heavens!
MRS. CARTON. Merciful Heavens!
MISS LARRABEE. Oh! Horrors!
} *(At once.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. My goodness!

(Two women scream loudly. DAVE *lights a lamp.)*

PETE. Weston! Picked!

SHERIFF. *(Coming through the crowd)* What's this? What's this? A man killed?

OMNES. Man killed!

JOE. No, not killed—dead! (DAVE *comes down with lighted lamp.)*

SHERIFF. I tell you the man's been shot. And here is the weapon! *(Holding up* MRS. WESTON'S *pistol.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Surprised)* What—— My—— *(Interrupted.* TEDDY *interrupts by a quiet look.)*

SHERIFF. *Yours!* Is this *your* pistol?

MRS. WESTON. Yes, it's—it's *mine!*

SHERIFF. *(Whistles)* You acknowledge that!

MRS. WESTON. Yes, I—I took it off—and gave it —I gave it to——that is, I didn't want—I—didn't want it——

SHERIFF. *(Very slowly and impressively) And you were found here just now with the body?*

MRS. WESTON. Oh, no! I came in and found the body with—— *(She stops aghast at the thing she is about to say.)* No!—I mean—when I came in just now I didn't find—— I didn't find—that is—I found—the body *alone!*

SHERIFF. You contradict yourself, madam. *(His hand on* WESTON'S *hand.)* The man can't have been dead more than a few minutes. *(Rising)* I'm very sorry, but I must place you under—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. Say, Sheriff, one minute! That *is* the lady's pistol—but I took it from her early in the evening. *This* was the lady's husband. *I hated him,* you understand? Don't trouble *her.* I am the one you're looking for!

(A moment, then movement and exclamation from everyone.)

MRS. WESTON. *(Impulsively)* No! No!

(TEDDY *looks at her gratefully, but shakes his head slightly and holds out his hands toward the sheriff.)*

TEDDY. Mrs. Weston found *me* beside the body!

(SHERIFF'S *hands on* TEDDY'S *shoulder.)*

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *The court-room at Silverville. A pleasant, sunny room with warm brown walls. At* C. *back is the* JUDGE'S *desk and seat. On each side of him are two square windows through which the morning sky and some trees are seen.* L.C. *is the prisoner's seat; at* L. *are the seats for the Jurors; at* R.C. *is the place for the witnesses to give their evidence; at* R. *are rows of benches for the public. At* R.B. *is the room where the witnesses are.*

DISCOVERED: *At the curtain the court room is crowded. The twelve Jurymen are in their places, the seats for the public are crowded. In the front row are* MRS. CARTON *and* MISS LARRABEE, *and with them* DAVE. *Back in the crowd are* JIM *and* MOLLY LARKIN, *side by side.* TEDDY *is in the prisoner's place, with* RANSOM *beside him. The* DISTRICT ATTORNEY *who is conducting the case against* TEDDY *is in his place. The Jury looks solemn and against* TEDDY. *Loud noise and confusion, cat-calls, whistling, hissing and booing.*

(The JUDGE *raps for order in vain. Finally the* SHERIFF *calls out "Order!" with a strong, forceful voice and the noise subsides.)*

SHERIFF. We must have order here, gentlemen!

OMNES. Pete's a fool! etc.

JUDGE. *(To* TEDDY) Do you wish to examine this witness further?

TEDDY. *(To* JUDGE) No, Your Honor. (PETE

rises. To PETE) That's all right, Pete. I know you meant to help me, but take my word for it, lying never pays.

JUDGE. *(To* PETE) You can remain in the court-room if you like.

(PETE *nods his head and joins* MRS. CARTON, *crossing* R. *The people slightly hiss* PETER *again as he joins them.)*

PETE. I wanted to help him! I wanted to *help* him! *(And he bursts out sobbing as he sits with his head in his hands.)*

JUDGE. Ladies and gentlemen. There seems to be a mistaken idea on the part of this public. You are not present as judge. That is *my* function—and I feel capable of doing my duty—without assistance from you. I do not intend to have repeated to-day the scenes of yesterday during the examination of Molly Larkin and the Indian. Call the next witness!

ATTORNEY. *(To* SHERIFF) The man called Joe.

(SHERIFF *opens the door* L.B. *and beckons off. Enter* JOE. *He nods to the* JUDGE.)

SHERIFF. Go there—— *(Pointing to witness-box.)*

(JOE, *with a nod to* DAVE *and* PETE *and the ladies, goes to the box. He looks over and smiles at* TEDDY *encouragingly and shakes his own hand as if shaking* TEDDY'S. TEDDY *returns the compliment with the same business.* DAVE *and* PETE *watch* JOE, *eagerly on the alert to give him a hint as to his testimony.)*

ATTORNEY. You lived on the ranch with the prisoner?

JOE. Yes, thank God!

ATTORNEY. Weston used to come to the ranch?

JOE. Oftener than he was welcome!

ATTORNEY. Oh, then North didn't like him?

(TEDDY *tries to object.* JOE *speaks before* TEDDY.)

JOE. I ain't said that. None of us war fur or ag'in' him. He jes' weren't one of us!

(TEDDY *sits, feeling the answer is satisfactory.)*

ATTORNEY. Did you ever hear of any sort of misunderstanding between North and Weston?

JOE. No.

ATTORNEY. Was North, to your knowledge, particularly fond of *Mrs.* Weston?

JOE. *We all* was!

ATTORNEY. Did you notice ever any symptoms of jealousy of North on the part of Weston?

JOE. Don't know what you're driving at!

ATTORNEY. I'm driving at the fact that Weston was jealous of North.

TEDDY. *(Rises quickly, saying) You're* not on the stand. Let the witness do the testifying. *(Sits.)*

JOE. Weston weren't jealous of no man what made love to his wife.

ATTORNEY. Did North make love to Mrs. Weston?

JOE. Not by a—— *(Interrupted.)*

JUDGE. Answer yes or no.

JOE. No.

ATTORNEY. But he loved her?

TEDDY. *(To* JUDGE, *rising)* Your Honor, I object to the question.

JUDGE. Objection sustained. (TEDDY *sits.)*

ATTORNEY. Were Mrs. Weston and her husband on good terms?

JOE. I don't know.

ATTORNEY. What do you think?

JOE. Should think she was a damn fool if they was!

JUDGE. Confine yourself to simpler languages.

ATTORNEY. What do you know *against* the *deceased?*

JOE. He chased every petticoat in sight.

ATTORNEY. Is that unusual in Silverville?

JOE. Yes, we don't chase petticoats that we ain't no call to run after.

ATTORNEY. You were with North shortly before the murder?

JOE. Yes.

ATTORNEY. What was the object of your conversation with him?

(TEDDY *smiles and winks at* JOE.)

JOE. I won't tell!

ATTORNEY. You refuse to answer?

TEDDY. *(Smiling)* Oh, go on! Tell him, Joe!

JUDGE. *(To* TEDDY) You will only hurt your case by these interruptions. It would be much better if you had engaged a lawyer to defend you in the usual manner, rather than attempting to conduct your own defence. In any event, you must show more respect for the customs of this court.

TEDDY. I beg Your Honor's pardon.

(JUDGE *bows to* ATTORNEY *to go on with the examination.)*

ATTORNEY. You agree with the other witnesses that the prisoner is a noted amateur fighter?

JOE. You ain't doing him justice! He can lick anything! He ain't no amachure!

ATTORNEY. I see—he is used to fighting? He is of an aggressive nature?

JOE. *(Doesn't altogether understand)* If you mean as how he ain't afraid to tackle anyone, right—

ATTORNEY. You think it physically possible for the accused to kill Weston?

JOE. Of course so—but he *didn't*——

TEDDY. *(Excitedly)* I have retracted that confession! I lied to save the woman I loved whom I thought in danger.

JUDGE. *(Interrupting quickly)* Go on with your cross-examination.

TEDDY. When you heard me say I killed that man, did you believe me?

JOE. Not for a minute!

TEDDY. Why?

JOE. Cause I know'd as you didn't do it!

TEDDY. What would you call in your own picturesque language, the attacking of an unarmed man in the dark with a pistol?

JOE. What a Gad——

TEDDY. *(Quickly)* No oaths!

JOE. *(After a moment's hesitation)* A dirty, onery, low-down trick——

TEDDY. Did I ever take the slightest unfair advantage in any fight I was ever in?

JOE. Never!

TEDDY. Have I ever to your knowledge injured a living soul?

JOE. No, by—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupting)* Let it go at no. Have you heard me quarrel time and time again with the boys to keep them from lynching?

JOE. Yes, it's the only real grudge the boys hez ag'in' you!

JUDGE. Are these questions material?

TEDDY. I think so. *(Forgetting himself and his examination a moment.)* I want to prove that I have always been on the side of law and order, and no matter how circumstances may point against me, in spite of my confession of guilt that night—which was a lie—still I want to persuade these twelve men by giving them a knowledge of my character that it is not possible for me to have done the atrocious deed of which I stand here accused.

(Timid murmur of approval from the audience—"Good! Good!")

JUDGE. Continue the cross-examination of your witness.

TEDDY. In your conversation with me, about which you were just now questioned, when you refused to answer, what *was* the subject?

JOE. *(Terribly embarrassed)* It was about—lovin' and gettin' married!

TEDDY. Love for whom?

JOE. Oh, Boss!

TEDDY. Go on—speak out! You forget what's at stake, old man—my life!

JOE. I wanted Midge——

TEDDY. *(To* JUDGE) My little adopted sister.

JOE. And you said as you ain't got no objections and advised me to go ahead and ask her.

TEDDY. What else did we talk about?

JOE. Nothing else. *(He smiles.)* The whole blamed gang wanted her, too!

TEDDY. *(To* JOE) Say, Joe, have you asked her yet?

JUDGE. *(To* TEDDY) That question is not——

TEDDY. Oh, go on, Judge! Let me ask! I'd feel easier about the little girl in case it goes wrong with *me* here.

JOE. Boss, she took to the idea like a duck to the water!

TEDDY. *(Leans out to* JOE, *who leans over to him and they shake hands)* Bully, Joe!

JUDGE. Continue the examination.

TEDDY. Beg your pardon, Judge. *(Goes back to his place, smiling affectionately at* JOE.) I tell you, Joe, you've got a great girl! (JUDGE *raps once, and* TEDDY *quickly goes on with his questions.)* Did you ever know of my making love to Mrs. Weston?

JOE. No.

TEDDY. Did you ever hear me say anything about ever *marrying* Mrs. Weston?

JOE. We'd all have been red hot for it, but there warn't never nothing said!

TEDDY. Was everyone in Silverville as pleasant to Weston as I was?

JOE. No! Half the push always gave him the shake!

TEDDY. I've finished with the witness.

(A loud sigh of relief from TEDDY'S *friends among the public—a movement of everyone speaking in low whispers, one to the other. Similar movement among the* JURY. *Bus.)*

JUDGE. *(To* JOE) You may join the public.

JOE. Thank you. *(To* TEDDY, *with real feeling)* Good luck, Boss!

TEDDY. God bless you, Joe!

JUDGE. The next witness!

ATTORNEY. Louisa Prissims.

(SHERIFF *opens the door* R.E. *and beckons off. Enter* MISS PRISSIMS. *Crowd titter.* MISS PRISSIMS *rather frightened and very nervous.* SHERIFF *leads her to the witness stand.)*

ATTORNEY. What are you?

MISS PRISSIMS. Beg pardon?

ATTORNEY. What are you?

MISS PRISSIMS. I'm a woman.

ATTORNEY. I mean, what's your business?

MISS PRISSIMS. I am the pianist of the dance hall.

ATTORNEY. You remember the night of the murder?

MISS PRISSIMS. Yep!

ATTORNEY. What is most indelibly stamped upon your mind?

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Looks embarrassed and hesitates)* I—I waltzed with Mr. North——

(All laugh—not too loud. TEDDY *buries his face in his arms, laughing. Laughter in the court.* MISS PRISSIMS *looks surprised and frightened.)*

ATTORNEY. I mean as to the murder? You were with Mr. Weston and the prisoner a short time before?

MISS PRISSIMS. Yes—I think so——

ATTORNEY. Aren't you sure?

MISS PRISSIMS. No, I ain't exactly sure.

ATTORNEY. Did you hear their conversation?

MISS PRISSIMS. I don't know. I forget.

ATTORNEY. Now, what *did* happen?

MISS PRISSIMS. I—I—don't remember——

ATTORNEY. What do you remember?

MISS PRISSIMS. Me and Miss Weston went into the dressing room, and she laid down and I ate a sandwich. I ate *two,* and we stayed about ten minutes—and when I went out I saw her husband dead.

ATTORNEY. You seem to remember all that very perfectly.

MISS PRISSIMS. Yep.

ATTORNEY. When you and Mrs. Weston left Weston, he was *alone?*

MISS PRISSIMS. Yep.

ATTORNEY. I am through, Your Honor, but I should like the privilege of calling this witness again.

JUDGE. *(To* TEDDY) Do you wish to question the witness?

TEDDY. *(With humor)* I beg to be excused, Your Honor!

JUDGE. The next witness.

(The SHERIFF *motions* MISS PRISSIMS *to take a place with the public.)*

MISS PRISSIMS. *(Going to seat)* I just hate that man!

ATTORNEY. The girl, Midge.

(SHERIFF *opens the door* R.B. *and beckons off. Enter* MIDGE. *She is pale and on the verge of tears. Her face is drawn with the suspense and fear of the moment.* SHERIFF *leads her to witness box. Her first look has been at the* JUDGE, *and then her eyes have quickly traversed the court for* TEDDY. *She finds him, her eyes dilate, and her breath comes more quickly. She goes to her place with her eyes still on* TEDDY.)

ATTORNEY. You were at the dance in Molly Larkin's hall the night of the murder?

MIDGE. *(Gasps)* Yes, sir—— *(As she speaks she takes her gaze from* TEDDY *to the* ATTORNEY. *After she finishes each speech she steals a quick glance at* TEDDY *and then back again to the* JUDGE.)

ATTORNEY. When did you last see North? How long before the breaking up of the party?

MIDGE. *(Gasps)* I seen him then.

ATTORNEY. Yes, I know—but when before?

MIDGE. About fifteen minutes.

ATTORNEY. Where and how?

MIDGE. I went outside with him.

ATTORNEY. Why?

MIDGE. Cause—cause somebody—I think it was *me*—wanted him to go.

ATTORNEY. Who else was with you?

MIDGE. *(Gasps)* Miss Weston.

ATTORNEY. And Mrs. Weston asked him to go out?

MIDGE. Yes, sir—her and me together.

ATTORNEY. Was anybody else there?

MIDGE. *(Gasps)* Yes, sir——

ATTORNEY. Who?

MIDGE. Mr. Weston.

ATTORNEY. Oh! Did you hear quarreling between Mr. Weston and North?

MIDGE. *(Slowly, fearfully)* Yes, sir——

ATTORNEY. Really quarreling, almost a fight?

MIDGE. Yes, sir.

ATTORNEY. Did you hear what North said to Weston?

(MIDGE *looks at* TEDDY.)

TEDDY. Speak the truth, Midge. Don't be afraid. It'll come out all right in the end.

MIDGE. I don't know—at least, I can't remember —I mean yes——

ATTORNEY. Ah! He said that he would *kill him?*

MIDGE. But she and me we persuaded him not to, and he went out with me.

ATTORNEY. And when he left you outside, where was he going?

MIDGE. Back to the dance hall——

ATTORNEY. Where you all found him soon after with the murdered man?

MIDGE. Yes, sir.

ATTORNEY. How long after?

MIDGE. I don't know.

ATTORNEY. Were you and North outside together, close by the door?

MIDGE. No, sir; he was down by the bottom of the steps.

ATTORNEY. Did you see anyone else go upstairs and into the room?

MIDGE. No, sir.

ATTORNEY. Could anyone have gone up without your seeing them?

MIDGE. I don't know, sir—I mean, no, sir.

(Audience shake their heads at their neighbors— JURY *bus.)*

ATTORNEY. Your witness, Mr. North. (ATTORNEY *motions to* TEDDY—TEDDY *rises.)*

TEDDY. Midge, dear——

MIDGE. Oh, Brother Teddy! *(Begins to cry softly.)*

TEDDY. *(Almost breaks down himself at the sight of her tears; his lips quiver as he speaks—he pauses to control himself)* Midge, I'm awfully sorry to ask you this, but for my sake you'll have to brace up, little girl, and answer. I think there's a mistake in the minds of the jury about the cause of my quarrel with Mr. Weston which you overheard. What was the cause?

MIDGE. *(Slowly—after a moment)* Me—it was me——

(JURY *bus. All look from one to the other—similar movement on the part of the* JURY.)

TEDDY. Was Mrs. Weston in any way mentioned?

MIDGE. Why, you know, Brother Teddy——

TEDDY. Yes, *I* know, little girl, but *they* don't!

MIDGE. No, she hadn't nothing whatsoever to do with it.

*(*JURY *bus. The public nod their heads to each other. The* JURY *shows intense interest.)*

TEDDY. And the quarrel was because——

MIDGE. Because Mr. Weston had said to me what he hadn't ought to, and done what he hadn't ought ter—*(Beginning to cry again)*—and I *told you!*

TEDDY. When we were outside, did I hurry back?

MIDGE. No, we walked about for ever so long, till the mad was all cooled down out of you, and then we sat down at the foot of the steps and I sang you your song all through.

TEDDY. How many verses?

MIDGE. Three.

TEDDY. That would take from five to ten minutes, wouldn't it?

MIDGE. *(Very affirmatively) Well I guess!*

TEDDY. And when I went back to the hall, how did I appear?

MIDGE. *(Crying, speech broken with sobs)* Why, when you left me you was happy and a-whistling. Oh! How could anyone think it was you done such a thing! *(She breaks down entirely.)*

TEDDY. *(Tears in his eyes and in a husky voice)* Thank you, Midge! That'll do. *(To* JUDGE) Your Honor, I've finished with the witness. *(Sits down.)*

(A short pause. Several voices in the audience heard blowing their noses and clearing their throats. The JURY *looks solemn and inscrutable.* TEDDY *sits in his chair, his forehead in his hands. The* SHERIFF *takes* MIDGE *to her seat.* JOE *rises and takes her beside him—they sit with* JOE'S *arm around her.)*

JUDGE. Bring the next witness!
ATTORNEY. Mrs. Jessica Weston.

(SHERIFF *opens the door and beckons. Intense curiosity on part of the public, who crane their necks to catch the first glimpse.* TEDDY *lifts his head with his face tense.* RANSOM'S *hand holds it in a tight grasp. Enter* MRS. WESTON. *Excited whispers among the public of "That's her! That's the wife!" Led by the* SHERIFF, *she takes her place at the witness stand.)*

ATTORNEY. Your name is?
MRS. WESTON. Jessica Weston.
ATTORNEY. The widow of Mr. Weston?
MRS. WESTON. Yes.
ATTORNEY. How long were you married?
MRS. WESTON. Six years.
ATTORNEY. And during that time what was the nature of your home life?
MRS. WESTON. We never lived happily from the second week of our marriage.
ATTORNEY. Was your husband a quarrelsome man?
MRS. WESTON. No, *not with men.*
ATTORNEY. Had he any strong enemy in Silverville beside the prisoner? *(She looks at* TEDDY *kindly a moment.)*
MRS. WESTON. I do not know that Mr. North was my *husband's* enemy.
ATTORNEY. A man who wishes to marry another man's wife is more or less the enemy of the husband——
MRS. WESTON. I do not admit that Mr. North wanted to marry me.
ATTORNEY. Do you deny that he was in love with you?
MRS. WESTON. He never told me so.

ATTORNEY. There was not a tacit understanding that, were you a widow—of course, we will suppose by natural events—there would be a marriage between you and the prisoner?

MRS. WESTON. *(Indignantly)* No!

TEDDY. *(Rising excitedly)* Your Honor, I object to the examination, which is an insult to this lady! I can furnish plenty of proof that I was never anything but an object of derision to Mrs. Weston.

JUDGE. The objection is *not* sustained! (TEDDY *sits.)*

ATTORNEY. *(With meaning emphasis)* Since you *both* find *this subject* so *disagreeable,* we will leave it for *the present.* What took place between your husband and North, shortly before the murder, in your presence?

MRS. WESTON. *(After a slight pause)* A quarrel —but my husband was to blame.

ATTORNEY. Oh, naturally! What was the object of the quarrel?

MRS. WESTON. Weston had insulted Mr. North's ward.

JUDGE. *You* were in no wise connected with the quarrel?

MRS. WESTON. *No!* My husband would never have quarrelled over me. He would have been glad of no matter how compromising attentions, if they only kept out of his way.

ATTORNEY. A man, then, you think could not quarrel with your husband over you?

MRS. WESTON. No!

ATTORNEY. Oh! It was necessary, then, in order to quarrel with your husband *on your account* to bring upon a disagreement on *some other subject? (A general alert movement among the public and the* JURY *as they follow the* ATTORNEY'S *train of reasoning.)* That is very simple. It has been done for many centuries.

MRS. WESTON. *(Sort of helplessly)* I had nothing to do with the quarrel between the two men.

JUDGE. In this quarrel were violent words used?

MRS. WESTON. *(After a short pause of unwillingness to speak)* Yes.

JUDGE. On the part of the prisoner?

MRS. WESTON. *(Same pause)* Yes.

(Movement and whispering among the public. Exchange of glances among them. As the JUDGE *asks his next question* JOE *"Shs!" the crowd into silence, and the silence and the attitude of listening are more intense.)*

ATTORNEY. You were frightened?

MRS. WESTON. *(Hesitates)* I——

ATTORNEY. You begged North to withdraw?

MRS. WESTON. Yes.

ATTORNEY. Then you were afraid of the consequences if he remained? (MRS. WESTON *bows her head in assent.)* I presume, as you must have known North's reputation for strength, you did not fear any harm he might receive from your husband?

MRS. WESTON. No——

ATTORNEY. And I take it for granted, under the circumstances, you had not any great solicitude *for your husband? (A short pause.)* There is only one other fear, then, left open to you, and that is the fear of the consequences *for North,* should he harm more than was lawful the man at whom he was enraged. Did he, the prisoner, use specific terms in his threat? —I must *warn* you to remember that you are under oath, and that I have already examined *other* eyewitnesses of the quarrel. Could you repeat what North said, or even approximate his words?

MRS. WESTON. No.

ATTORNEY. Not at all?

MRS. WESTON. Not at all.

ATTORNEY. Did he say, for instance, "I'll knock you down"? *(A derisive exclamation, a sort of half-laugh from* TEDDY.)

MRS. WESTON. No!

ATTORNEY. He more probably said, *"I'll kill you!"* or words to that effect?

MRS. WESTON. *(Still slightly scornful)* Much more probably!

ATTORNEY. Ah! *(Short start on part of public.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Quickly)* As a man will do in a great rage without *meaning literally* what he says!

ATTORNEY. But in this case the man threatened *was* killed not many minutes after.

MRS. WESTON. *(Slightly excited)* I saw Mr. North leaving the room without harming my husband.

ATTORNEY. Did he say nothing about coming back? (MRS. WESTON *does not answer.)* You interrupted the quarrel for a moment, but was nothing said about resuming it later? (MRS. WESTON *does not answer.)* You heard my question? *(She hesitates.)*

JUDGE. You can scarcely fail to see, Madam, that your refusal to answer will be construed into an affirmative reply.

MRS. WESTON. No! No, he is innocent!

ATTORNEY. But there *was* something said about returning later to finish the quarrel?

MRS. WESTON. Yes, but—— *(Interrupted.)*

ATTORNEY. *(Interrupting)* After North left the room, what happened?

MRS. WESTON. I had some words with my husband.

ATTORNEY. About North?

MRS. WESTON. No! No! Then I went into the dressing room beyond with Miss Prissims, to ask her not to repeat what she had overheard.

ATTORNEY. You left your husband alone in the dance hall?

MRS. WESTON. Yes.

ATTORNEY. What called you back, a noise?

MRS. WESTON. No, I heard nothing. I came back to join my guests.

ATTORNEY. And during all this time where was your pistol?

MRS. WESTON. *(Confused)* I—I don't know. I gave it to someone early in the evening to put aside—while I was dancing.

ATTORNEY. To *whom* did you give it?

MRS. WESTON. *(Evading)* There were several men near me—it made no difference to whom I gave it—it was placed one side at once——

ATTORNEY. Did you give it to *North?*

MRS. WESTON. *(After a short pause)* Yes. *(A long sigh from the audience.* MRS. WESTON *begins to grow terrified as she sees to what her replies are leading.)*

ATTORNEY. To go to your entering the room again where you had left your husband, what did you first see?

MRS. WESTON. *(Growing more and more terrified)* Nothing—— It was—dark! All dark!

ATTORNEY. You came slowly forward?

MRS. WESTON. *(Seeing the scene before her as she speaks, and forgetting the courtroom and her audience)* Till I saw *some*thing like a shadow lying in the moonlight; and I went towards it, not dreaming what it was, till I reached the dead body of my husband! I looked up in terror, and above it stood—My God—— *(She breaks out, terrified at what she is going to say. The* JURY *have leaned slightly forward. The public is motionless, fearful of losing a word.)*

ATTORNEY. *You saw North* with your pistol in

his hand? *(She gazes, dazed, ahead of her, without speaking. Bus.)*

JUDGE. Come, come, Madam! What *did* you see?

MRS. WESTON. *(As if in a trance)* I don't know —I don't know!

ATTORNEY. *You saw North.*

MRS. WESTON. *(Still partly dazed)* Yes, I saw North. They all know that.

ATTORNEY. You saw North standing over the body of the man you had heard him threaten to kill?

MRS. WESTON. *(Breathlessly)* Yes——

ATTORNEY. You heard North leave this man with the promise to finish the quarrel later.

MRS. WESTON. Yes——

ATTORNEY. You had given him your pistol during the evening, and that pistol was found beside the dead man?

TEDDY. *(Rising)* I object—— *(Interrupted.)* You are leading her on to convict me——

MRS. WESTON. I!—I—convict *him? (She becomes wild, hysterical.)* The man is innocent! If I convict him, let me swear again every word I have spoken is a lie! (JURY *bus. She sinks into the witness chair, her face buried in her arms, sobbing aloud.)*

(MIDGE *goes to* MRS. WESTON *and, putting her arms around her, comforts her. Excitement among the public—movement among the* JURORS. TEDDY *sits down.)*

JIM. *(In the crowd)* She have spoken the truth! She take it back because she love him!

SHERIFF. Order!

JIM. She know he kill her man!

JUDGE. Order! Or I'll clear the Court! *(To*

MRS. WESTON) Are you aware of the meaning of perjury, Madam, and of its punishment?

MRS. WESTON. *(Controlling her sobs and rising)* I would rather be punished for perjury than convict an innocent man! *(Applause from the public and hisses from* JIM.)

JUDGE. *(Raps for order)* Silence! Silence! *(The public is quiet. The* JUDGE *motions to the* ATTORNEY *to continue.)*

ATTORNEY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) That night when you found North above the dead body of your husband you did not think he had killed him?

MRS. WESTON. He himself had sworn to his innocence——

ATTORNEY. But at the scene of the murder and *beside the body*—the supreme test—he confessed his guilt. *(To the* JUDGE) Your Honor, I am finished with the witness. *(He sits.)*

(JUDGE *motions to* TEDDY. MRS. WESTON *turns and looks timidly, pleadingly to* TEDDY, *distressed at what she has already said, wishes his forgiveness, while she dreads her future answers.* TEDDY *rises slowly, as if dreading the ordeal. He does not look at* MRS. WESTON *until he has risen, then he slowly turns and faces her—they look into each other's eyes a moment, then* TEDDY *drops his and takes a long breath.)*

TEDDY. Mrs. Weston, you just now said you believed in my innocence?

MRS. WESTON. Absolutely!

TEDDY. *(Affirmatively)* But your evidence was true, all the same? *(She nods affirmative.)* Only your *belief* in *my innocence* is *so great* that you thought perjury justifiable if necessary to save my being unjustly condemned?

MRS. WESTON. *(Very low voice)* Yes——

TEDDY. *(Very embarrassed)* I must now ask you an awful embarrassing question. There is an opinion in the court that it isn't so much absolute belief in my innocence as love for me that has influenced you in my behalf. The only way to properly disabuse their minds is for me to ask you a question outright, and you will speak the truth, won't you?

MRS. WESTON. Yes.

TEDDY. *(Desperately—very slowly)* Mrs. Weston, do you *love* me? *(Music pp.)*

MRS. WESTON. *(Surprised, afraid)* The truth? I am to speak the truth?

TEDDY. Yes, on your oath, the truth.

(A short pause. MRS. WESTON *looks into* TEDDY'S *eyes, and the love hitherto concealed wells up into her own. Music very piano, "I love a lovely girl, I do.")*

MRS. WESTON. *(Slowly)* Yes, I love you better than all the world!

(JURY *bus. General movement from the public and* JURY. ATTORNEY *nods his head to the* JURY, *as much as to say, "I told you so."* TEDDY *is oblivious of everything except* MRS. WESTON'S *words; he has even forgotten that they were against his case. He makes a sudden movement of great surprise and looks at her, dumbfounded, unable to speak or even to breathe for a minute. She gazes back into his eyes—she, too, forgetful for a moment of her surroundings. The pause should be held as long as possible. Finally* TEDDY *makes a movement and gesture of not being able to comprehend it or realize it. He turns questioningly to* RANSOM. RANSOM *smiles very slightly but sympathetically back.* TEDDY

leans over and whispers to RANSOM. RANSOM *nods his head emphatically.)*

TEDDY. Pete! Pete! Did I hear right? *(Embracing* PETE. *Music stops.* PETE *nods his head again.* TEDDY *turns to* JUDGE.) Your Honor, will you kindly ask the witness to *repeat the answer?*

JUDGE. The witness stated that she *did* love you, which is what the State maintained.

TEDDY. *I* never guessed it! Never!

JUDGE. The point is that her love for you naturally prejudices her in your favor, and accounts for her belief in your innocence. Do you wish to further examine the witness?

TEDDY. Well, I should say I did! *(Pulling himself together. He looks at* MRS. WESTON *and the tenderness comes back into his eyes.) Jessica,* on that awful night—— *(Interrupted.)*

JUDGE. Address the witness as Mrs. Weston, please—this is a trial, not a courtship.

TEDDY. Did I ever make love to you?

MRS. WESTON. No.

TEDDY. Did you ever give me any idea that you loved me?

MRS. WESTON. I didn't love you until the night of the dance, and I didn't realize I loved you until the day after——

TEDDY. Really! What made you? *(Interrupted.)*

JUDGE. That question is not pertinent.

TEDDY. Excuse me, Your Honor. *(He turns to* MRS. WESTON *and throws her a kiss slyly.)* You first saw me after the death, standing over the body?

MRS. WESTON. Yes.

TEDDY. Could you say I had not entered the room at the same time as you?

MRS. WESTON. *(Catching the idea)* No, no! Why not? That was it!

TEDDY. Was the room dark enough to hide my entering?

MRS. WESTON. Of course it was. It was all black except where the moonlight streamed.

TEDDY. *(To* MRS. WESTON) Thank you. *(To* JUDGE) I have finished with the witness, Your Honor. *(He sits.)*

(MRS. WESTON *goes to a seat which is ready for her by* MIDGE, *and in front of the rest of the public, led by* TEDDY.)

ATTORNEY. That is the case for the prosecution, Your Honor.

JUDGE. How much time, gentlemen, would you like to sum up?

TEDDY. I shall not take five minutes, Your Honor. *(Goes back to seat.)*

ATTORNEY. Your Honor, I shall not take as much.

(JURY *bus. Movement among* JURY *and among public.* TEDDY *sits.* JUDGE *speaks a word to the* SHERIFF *and then nods to* TEDDY *to go on.* TEDDY *makes ready to address the* JURY. *The public take their settled positions and sit rigid.* TEDDY *rises. Absolute quiet. Second's pause before he begins.)*

TEDDY. Your Honor, I shall not attempt to stir your blood with any ornamental rhetoric, nor wet your eyes with any pathetic appeal. I wish to trust my life not to your emotions, but to your common sense. I am innocent, and knowing that, I have been and am not now afraid to trust myself alone and otherwise undefended to your unprejudiced judgment. I could have brought famous lawyers from the East to defend me, but I didn't feel I needed

them. Out here in the great West it is truth we are looking for and we know it when we see it.

OMNES. You're right, etc. You bet we do! *(A slight pause—"Good! Good!" from crowd.)*

TEDDY. It's the truth that I offer in my defense, and that I can do without help from anyone. My Eastern life is open to you—my college record—and afterwards in New York. Not a slur has my opponent been able to cast upon my character! And out here—in Colorado—— *(Turns)* Is there a man in this room or outside under God's sky for miles around that can accuse me of ever doing anyone an injury or of having committed any dishonest act? *(Pause. Loud "No, no!" from the public.)*

JUDGE. Address the Jury, not the public.

TEDDY. I beg your pardon. Witnesses have proved to you that I have always been on the side of law and order. The only thing that could rightly tell against me was giving myself up that night. But what I did was only natural. Every man values more highly than his own life the life of the woman he holds most dear. That is the only essence of love, whether it's for the woman you wish to make your *wife* or for the woman who brought you into the world! Your action may be wise or foolish, but at such a moment you don't *weigh* your *act! ("You bet!" etc., from crowd. "Of course!"* JIM, *unseen among the public, hisses.)* I claim some husband, or brother, or honest lover unlawfully avenged himself on Weston, not I. The pistol was there for anyone to find and use. The circumstances which seem so fatal to me can be made equally fatal to any number of imaginary cases, and they do not and cannot prove me guilty, I maintain, standing here with my life spread out before you, and swearing by everything I am, as I believe in an eternal life, that I am *innocent—innocent—innocent! (Crowd count three—then applaud.)*

ATTORNEY. *(Rising quickly and speaking excitedly)* Facts! Your Honor, facts! Gentlemen of the Jury, facts! The accused has not disproved *one* of the facts that convict him of the murder. He has denied them—that is usual! He has pointed out some other might have committed the crime—that is also customary! I do not claim for a moment that Edward North is or ever has been a depraved character—but I do maintain for what *is* proved, I believe, by the facts, and on these facts I rest my case. *(He sits.)*

(Audience whisper to each other. The public is still, deeply depressed. Only one or two speak to each other in silent whispers. The JURY *silently whisper among themselves. The Foreman speaks a word to the man behind him, who nods his head.)*

JUDGE. Mr. Foreman, gentlemen——

(A look from the FOREMAN *toward the other* JURYMEN, *who each nod in the affirmative to the* FOREMAN.)

FOREMAN. *(Rising)* May it please Your Honor, the Jury are ready with their verdict without leaving the room.

(Great commotion and excitement among the public. Those at the back rise to see better.)

CLERK. The prisoner will please rise and face his Jury.

(TEDDY *rises and calmly but with a set face looks at the* JURY.)

JUDGE. Mr. Foreman, we are ready.

(JURY *rises.*)

FOREMAN. *(Slowly, impressive)* May it please Your Honor, we find the prisoner *guilty* of murder in the first degree.

CLERK. So say you, Mr. Foreman—so say you all?

(All bow their heads in solemn affirmation. A short silence. TEDDY *half sways back and forth, but immediately becomes rigid, keeping his gaze on the* JURY. *At the giving of the sentence,* MRS. WESTON, *with a loud breath of horror, has risen from her seat.)*

JUDGE. Edward North, have you anything further to say why sentence should not be passed upon you for the crime of which you are convicted?

(In the public there is a commotion which begins during this speech of the JUDGE. *As he finishes the commotion is greater.* MOLLY *is trying to speak and is making inarticulate sounds.* JIM'S *hand is over her mouth and he is saying, "Keep quiet!" "Stop!" etc. Another voice says, "Let her alone!" and with a wild cry* MOLLY *breaks loose.)*

MOLLY. Wait! Wait! He didn't do it, so help me God!

JIM. Shut your jaw——

MOLLY. *(Pushing her way out from among the people)* I was in my room that night all the time. I swore false when I said I went down the road! *(She is out from among the people by now)* I know who did it! *(Crosses to* L.*)*

JIM. Dat's a lie! *(Great commotion among public.)*

JUDGE. Order, or I'll clear the court!

MOLLY. Lemme kiss the book! I've been afraid of him, but I can't see no innocent man swing for what *he* done! I'll tell you who did it! *(Crosses up to table—takes book.)*

JIM. Don't you speak a word!

MOLLY. Gimme the book! (MOLLY *seizes the book.)* Gimme the book! *(Presses it to her lips. At that moment* JIM *shoots her. With one half-cry, half-groan she falls instantly to the floor. Tremendous commotion. The public falls on* JIM, *who tries to make his escape.* MRS. WESTON *comes forward quickly to* MOLLY, *also* JUDGE *goes to her, and* TEDDY.)

JOE *and* CROWD. Shoot him! Don't let him get out! Shoot! *(There is a great noise—all shouting.)*

TEDDY. *(Springs to the crowd, climbing upon their backs and breaking through them)* Boys! Boys, stop! For God's sake, don't kill him! Don't you see, the woman's dead, and only *he* can save me!

THE CROWD. *(Not hearing* TEDDY) Shoot him down! Kill him!

(JIM *in extreme corner* R., *down stage, thrown down, with* JOE *holding him down.)*

TEDDY. *(With a supreme effort* TEDDY *breaks through the crowd and reaches* JOE, PETE *and* JIM. *The crowd falls back and gradually grow quiet. To* JOE) Give him to me! He's mine! He belongs to me!

(MRS. WESTON, DAVE *and* SHERIFF, RANSOM *and a doctor from the crowd have carried* MOLLY *into the room where the witnesses were.)*

JUDGE. *(To* TEDDY) Bring the man here!

(TEDDY *brings* JIM *to* JUDGE—*throws him* L. JIM *is sullen and dogged.)*

JUDGE. *(To* JIM) Why did you shoot your sweetheart?

JIM. She talk too much.

JUDGE. You know you will hang for it?

JIM. Naw! She not dead. Jim only make her tongue quiet. Jim frighten Molly, but Jim not kill her!

JUDGE. Why were you afraid to have her tell who killed Weston? (JIM *does not answer.)*

TEDDY. He's *got* to speak!

JIM. Jim won't speak.

TEDDY. Your Honor, he *must!*

(Re-enter MRS. WESTON—*she goes to the* JUDGE.)

MRS. WESTON. The woman is dead.

JIM. Molly! *(He stands as if in a trance.)*

JUDGE. *(To* JIM) You've taken the life—— *(Interrupted.)*

TEDDY. *(Interrupts)* Your Honor—— *(With a motion toward* JIM, *whose lips are quivering and moving as if to speak.)*

JIM. *(To himself, half singing)* Jim didn't mean to do that. Jim's tried it and he don't want no life without Molly. The sun would set forever behind her grave and the stars be blind and the moon go mad. *(He pauses a second and then looks up and speaks aloud.)* Don't hurry, Molly! Jim he coming after—he catch up with you! *(To those about him)* It was me killed Weston because he try to take away Jim's girl! Now you-uns kill Jim!

(A loud "Ah!" from the public, some standing, some

sitting, in disorder. MRS. WESTON *seizes* TEDDY'S *arm. He holds her hand.* MIDGE *comes quickly to the other side of* TEDDY *and then takes that arm.)*

SHERIFF. *(Enters from* R.B.) Your Honor, the witness is coming to. She will live!

(There is a moment's surprise. Then JIM *makes a bolt to escape* R. *The crowd meet and stop him with cries, laughs and jeers.)*

JUDGE. Arrest the half-breed! (SHERIFF *goes to* JIM.) The court will take a recess until to-morrow morning at nine o'clock.

TEDDY. *(*C., *going to* MRS. WESTON) You know what you said under oath you'll have to stick to!

MRS. WESTON. *(*C.*)* I'm game!

TEDDY. Bully!

(Music swells.)

QUICK CURTAIN

COWBOY AND THE LADY

See Page 112

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